

"HANKS"
ASSORTED · YARNS ·
· FROM · PUCK ·

by . . . Illustrated by . . .
PUCK'S AUTHORS — PUCK'S ARTISTS

• PUCK'S MULBERRY SERIES •

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HANKS;
ASSORTED YARNS FROM PUCK.



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HANKS.

Assorted Yarns from Puck.

By

Puck's Authors

Illustrated by

Puck's Artists..



New York
Keppler & Schwarzmann
1893

PUCK PRESS

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TO PUCK'S READERS.

CONTENTS.

	Page.
The Senator.....	I
<i>H. C. Bunner.</i>	
A Prairie Blossom.....	13
<i>Madeline S. Bridges.</i>	
The Jigs of Abner Peabody.....	27
<i>C. S. Montgomery.</i>	
The Career of a Society Actress.....	39
<i>J. L. Ford.</i>	
The Story of Shiftless Smith.....	49
<i>C. H. Augur.</i>	
A Fin de Siècle Genie; or, Arabian Nights Up to Date	61
<i>W. J. Henderson.</i>	
The Mosquitoville Club.....	73
<i>R. K. Munkittrick.</i>	
The Story of William.....	83
<i>H. L. Wilson.</i>	
His Lucky Night.....	91
<i>Harry Romaine.</i>	
Foiled Again; or, The Banker's Vengeance.....	103
<i>Tudor Jenks.</i>	
Van Gibber and the Street-car.....	111
<i>Robert B. Peattie.</i>	
Suing for Damages.....	119
<i>G. H. Jessop.</i>	
Why the Reverend Edward Atkins Changed His Parish	127
<i>Wardon Allan Curtis.</i>	
Willy and The Missionary.....	145
<i>H. G. Paine.</i>	
A Slave to Fancy.....	155
<i>Flavel S. Mines.</i>	
George Byers.....	165
<i>Williston Fish</i>	

THE SENATOR.



"Your health, sir!"

THE SENATOR.



R. T. Gilmartin Hone stood at the entrance to the Senate Press Gallery, in the Capitol at Washington. He held a telegram in one hand; and he scowled at vacancy with an expression of perplexity and annoyance. The telegram read thus:

St. Jo., Feb. 4, 1892.

To T. Gilmartin Hone,

Washington, D. C.

Send four columns R. R. Subsidy Case for Sunday. Old board of directors indicted to-day. Get best legal opinion. Rush!

Rubicon.

Mr. Hone read it again, and the scowl on his brow deepened.

“What’s the matter, Gil?” asked a friend, coming out of the comfortable writing-room, with his overcoat on, and an exasperating day’s-work-done expression in his very walk.

Mr. Hone simply held up the telegram.

“Well, that’s all right, is n’t it?” said the friend.

Hanks;

Mr. Hone, still deep in perplexed thought, pointed silently to the words "best legal opinion."

"Well," said the friend, "what's the matter with that? There's only one person to go to. You'll have to buzz old man Greep. He knows more about it than any man in Washington. Been carrying it round under his hat for ten years. They call him the Father of the Case, in the Supreme Court. Go and interview him."



"Yes," said Mr. Hone, meditatively, "that's all very well. But I ain't interviewing Senator Greep very much nowadays."

"Why not?" inquired his friend, in wonderment. Then a thought seemed to strike him. "Oh, yes," he said; "it was you who wrote up his four-o'clock drunks, last year, was n't it? What the devil did you do that for, anyhow? That was a queer sort of break for you to make."

"Oh, it was the paper!" exclaimed Mr. Hone. "Our people would sell their eye-teeth for a sensation, you know. *I* was n't anxious for the job, but they would have it."

"H'm! And how many stories did you write about the old man?"

"Eight," said Mr. Hone, dismally.

"Well, this is a queer biz of ours," said his friend. "But I would n't let that stand in my

way. When a man gets to be of Greep's age and Greep's pull, it 's powerful little he cares what the newspapers say about him. Ten to one he 's forgotten where he saw them, if he saw them at all. Anyhow, you can't help yourself. Old Greep knows the whole Subsidy Case business, and nobody else. If you hurry up, you 'll catch him leaving his committee-room — they 've just adjourned."

They walked slowly forward, Mr. Hone preserving a gloomy silence. As they got out of the elevator, they saw the tall figure of the Senator stalking ahead of them, the tails of his black broadcloth frock coat flapping as he went. He



stared straight before him as he walked, caressing his long, white beard.

"Now is your time, Gil," said his friend ; "catch him! I rather think you 'll find him in a good humor. He 's been working off enough pure cussedness for ten men in the Senate all day. I guess he 's feeling good."

And, truly, something that looked like a smile

softened the hard, straight line of Senator Greep's mouth. He was thinking, perhaps, of the artistic manner in which he had broken up a new Senator from a Reform State in his maiden speech.

"Well, so long!" said his friend, walking on; and Mr. Hone reluctantly approached the great Senator. Mr. Hone was probably the only man in Washington who was heartily glad that the corridors of the Capitol are dark to the point of discomfort.

"Good afternoon, Senator," he began, feeling an unwonted heat rising in his cheeks. "I suppose you 've heard that the St. Jo. and Painted Falls Board of Directors were indicted to-day. Could you spare me the time to give me a little talk about that point that Judge Bagley brought up? Our people are taking special interest in the case, you know, and I 'd be very much obliged if you 'd give me as much as you can."

The Senator had laid his lean, muscular hand on Mr. Hone's shoulder.

"Ah, yes ;" he said, in his abstracted way ; "the St. Jo. and Painted Falls? Yes, yes. Very interesting case — very interesting, indeed. Yes, I shall be very glad to have a talk with you about that case. Come right into my room, young man ; come right into my room. You are quite right. It 's a case that ought to be properly presented to the public."

And with dignified old-time courtesy, but with his blue-gray eyes staring absent-mindedly before him, the Senator ushered the newspaper man into the deserted committee-room.

"Sit down," he said, cordially ; "sit down, sir. I am very glad to have the opportunity of



clearing the public mind in regard to that point that Judge Bagley raised. Very able man, Judge Bagley — very able, indeed; but decidedly young — yes, decidedly young. Now, as to this case, the main point at issue is whether the Act of 1868 supplemented or superseded the Act of 1849. Now it has been held — ”

And for ten minutes, during which time the warm feeling gradually subsided in Hone's cheeks, the old Senator talked on, pouring out of the boundless reservoir of his legal knowledge a steady stream of minute technicalities. Then, suddenly, with a sharp conversational bump, like a train when the air-brakes are shut off short, he interrupted himself to say:

“By the way, sir, by the way — of course, I recognize your face as one of the gentlemen of the Press. But to what paper are you attached?”

“To the *St. Jo. Rubicon*,” said Hone, softly, feeling trouble in his cheek-bones again.

"Ah, yes," said Senator Greep, pleasantly; "the St. Jo. *Rubicon*. A very able paper! A very able paper, indeed! You ought to be making a very great success of that paper; and I have no doubt you are. *Very* happy, indeed, to tell the St. Jo. *Rubicon* anything I know about this case. And, as I was saying, if we regard the law of 1849 as mandatory in its provisions, why—" and he plunged once more into the great Subsidy Case, while Mr. Hone nursed his startled nerves. He found it rather a difficult job. It was several minutes before he got the hang of the case again. Then, suddenly, just as he was getting his mind clear as to the Act of 1849, the air-brakes went down again with a jounce worse than before.

"Yes," said the Senator, "you may say to your paper—and a very fine paper it is, Mr.—; by the way, I believe you did n't mention your name?"

"Mr. Hone," said the newspaper man, in a voice suitable for the chamber of death.

"I beg your pardon," said the Senator, "I did n't quite catch the name."

Mr. Hone repeated it, a shade less feebly. He was glad it was a short name.

"Hone? Ah, yes, Mr. Hone. Well, Mr. Hone, I hope, whenever I can be of any service to the St. Jo. *Rubicon* you will have no hesitation in calling on me. An admirable paper, sir. A great medium for spreading popular knowledge. I am a very busy man, Mr. Hone, and I read few



Yarns from Puck.

papers, but I always read the St. Jo. *Rubicon*. Now, as to that case—”

The train was off again; but poor Mr. Gil-martin Hone was too dazed to know whether he was in it or not. He was conscious of only one thing—that the Senator had him, and had him cornered. He was hot all over now, but more particularly about the temples. He came to himself when the train stopped again. The Senator had laid a firm hand upon his knee.

“I must tell you once more, Mr. Hone,” he said, “how much I admire the work your paper is doing. It is an able paper throughout, and its Washington department is *particularly* well managed. I must say—what was it that clock struck? Four o’clock? Yes? Thank you. My sight is not so good as it was. Four o’clock, is it? Well, Mr. Hone, I am in the habit, at this hour, of taking a glass of whiskey. Do you ever drink it, Mr. Hone? Occasionally? Yes! It is my opinion that whiskey, used in extreme moderation, is a very valuable stimulant. Of course its abuse is in the highest degree improper, and I may say dangerous. The abuse of whiskey, Mr. Hone, has ruined many a fine career. But, in moderation, I find it beneficial; and I have some here that is *said* to be very good. I should like, Mr. Hone, I should very much like to have your opinion of it.” And without taking his nervous grasp from Hone’s knee the Senator reached to a little cupboard—the thought passed through Hone’s mind that he had arms like an orang-outang—and extracted a demijohn and two small glasses. “There,” he went on, “give me your opinion of it. Your health, sir! Do you find it to your liking?

Will you have another glass, Mr. Hone? I am sure an *occasional* glass of good whiskey will hurt no one. Well, we were discussing the Act of 1868."

The whiskey was probably the best Hone had ever tasted in his life; but it burned all the way down his throat, and it lay inside of him and burned. He knew he was red all over, but he felt as if the pit of his stomach must be the reddest place in his whole system. The clock ticked away ten hideously long minutes; and then he felt the Senatorial grasp tighten on his knee—a signal for the air-brakes.

"I must interrupt these remarks, Mr. Hone," said the Senator, in sweet but impressive tones, "to tell you how much I really think of your work on the St. Jo. *Rubicon*. It is very delightful work indeed. As I told you, I am a busy man; but I take so much interest in *your* work that I have had *all* of it cut out and preserved—all that relates to *me*. I have it right here, Mr. Hone."

And with one hand still grasping the young man's knee Senator Greep shot out the other orang-outang arm, turned a key in the drawer of the big table and drew forth eight long newspaper clippings.

"I have them all here, Mr. Hone, and, in case you have forgotten them, Mr. Hone, *I will READ them to you.*"

But Mr. T. Gilmartin Hone gave one wild desperate wrench for liberty, and flung himself out of the room. As he passed through the doorway, he cast one horror-stricken glance over his shoulder, and saw Senator Greep lying back in his chair, his tall frame shaking with one great, huge,

❖ Yarns from Puck. ❖

resounding laugh of perfect and glorious satisfaction.

This, really, is not my story. It's the Senator's. It is true.

H. C. Bunner.





A PRAIRIE BLOSSOM.



"She reappeared with a glass of milk."

A PRAIRIE BLOSSOM.

N my search over the boundless West for a tract of arable land upon which my friend, Ayer Cassell, could raise unlimited quantities of wheat, I had stumbled upon the little town of Stryk upp, near Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Its one street lay between two short, straggling rows of stores, saloons and blacksmith shops, and at either end widened out into a limitless expanse of prairie, dotted plentifully with good, comfortable-looking ranch houses and barns. I decided to recommend the place the first day I saw it; but I had lingered along, enjoying the pure air and the broad freedom of local customs, in order to give the impression of a deliberate and not a rash choice.

So, on that morning, I strolled, as usual, over to the store, where, in the three days, I had formed a deep intimacy with Bob, the clerk. In the West, friendship is like the growth of the prairie flowers — sudden and vivid. In front of the door I noticed an amiable-looking broncho, which some one had taken the apparently unnecessary precaution to tie to a post. When I entered the store, a young lady was conversing

with Bob. She wore a dark blue dress, the waist fitting her trim figure neatly, and the skirt short enough to show small feet and a pair of ankles merging into some bewildering curves. A coquettish cap covered her fine, wavy, black hair, under which her face showed a lovely fairness, like that of a pale, new-opened flower. She had the sweet delicacy of extreme youth, and the promise of still more beautiful womanhood. She had dark eyes, small, white teeth, and lips like scarlet thread. With an Eastern man's quick tact, I arranged a look of fascinating abstraction in the depths of a pair of eyes which, although they are mine — but no matter. And it did *not* matter to her. She looked through me for a second, with that far-reaching look we learn to know in the eyes of those people whose vision is adjusted to magnificent distances, and resumed her conversation with Bob; but her oblivion to me was so charming in its childish simplicity that I was more distracted than ever. Determined to make an impression, I addressed Bob as "Robert," in a superior, deep-chested tone, and asked permission to write a letter on the desk.



His reply of "Why, cert, old man!" had a somewhat too familiar fluency. I wrote my note —to nobody—with a thoughtful brow, occasionally passing my hand through my hair, in deep reflection, and presenting the utterly unconscious air of a man who feels he is being observed,

The fair unknown continued her conversation with Bob. Her voice was soft and pleasant and her use of English much choicer than the current vernacular. Still, her intonation was unmistakably Western.

During those moments I determined, with the readiness of twenty-four, to remain at Stryk-upp up to Cassell's limit of time, though for a purpose of which that unsuspecting capitalist was in complete ignorance.

When she had finished her business with Bob, she went out, mounted the broncho, and started off toward the broad expanse of prairie.

Keeping the well-behaved broncho in view, I followed him and his attractive burden out from the beaten road into a prairie path, which lengthened into miles.

The air was cool and bracing, and I enjoyed the expedition in which my sweet, unconscious guide led the way,—to what? An adventure of some sort, I felt assured.

Our destination appeared to be a large, substantial farm-house, situated near an extensive sheep corral. When I satisfied myself of this, I lay down flat in the grass, fearing that the young lady, in turning into her gate, might turn her eyes in my direction; and I lay there, to rest and to consider what my next move would be. I constrained myself to this retirement for full half an hour, never losing sight of the gate through which my fellow traveler had vanished. I arose at last, and moved briskly toward the house.

Two or three sheep dogs came down the path to meet me, with their noses suspiciously pointed; but, as I entered boldly, whistling and



talking to them, they contented themselves with sniffing audibly at my heels as I walked toward the door. It stood open, and *she* stood just within it. This time, when her eyes met mine, they did not pass beyond me, and she blushed deliciously all over the delicate pallor of her face and neck. I could see that, whatever might be my pretext, she understood quite well the meaning of my visit, and her look seemed to say: "How could you? This is very rash."

"Pardon me," I began timidly; "I am a stranger, an Eastern man — allow me," I handed my card, "and as I am traveling in this region to gain information —"

I did not find it necessary to finish my sentence, as a sweet voice interrupted:

"Are you, indeed? That's very nice; and, of course, I shall be very glad to — but, please be seated." (We were in the cosy parlor by this time.) "Mr.—er—Daudler"—reading from my card. "My name is Currie, Luella Currie. You are staying at Strykupp?"

"For a few days," I rejoined; "I think I had the pleasure of seeing you in the village this morning."

Yarns from Puck.

"Yes? I ride in once or twice a week. But make yourself at home, and let me bring you a glass of milk."

This charming Western hospitality! Could anything be more gracious?

She disappeared, and reappeared almost immediately with a glass of milk, which I quaffed thankfully. She seated herself near me, and throwing truth to the winds, I began to talk. My interest in Western life and habits seemed to bring us at once into sympathy; but I was wary, and, after making a few pretended notes in impossible shorthand, I thanked her, and begged the privilege of seeing her brother or father, in reference to cattle raising and subjects of like nature. She said, brightly: "Oh, I have no brothers, and father lives in Chicago! This is *my* place."

"You run it alone?" I asked, in surprise.

"Not alone. My cousin and his wife are with me. He attends to things; but I can tell you all *he* can tell; I shoukd hope so!" A pretty toss of her head.

"And—your mother is dead?"

"No—" with a suddenly grave look. "Mother is—married again. She is living in Toledo, and Father is married again, too. They were divorced a year ago. They both seem—very happy, *now*."

A sigh crossed her lips. I was silent, for in that sigh I heard a history. I understood, now, the meaning of her lonely life. And, because of her loneliness and her trusting innocence, I felt all the more bound to protect her. It seemed difficult to know what to say. I could not consistently condole with her on the loss of her

parents, nor could I offer any form of congratulations. She appeared to perceive my embarrassment, and continued pleasantly:

"I shall be very glad, however, to give you any information you may need."

Her utter unconsciousness of the strange informality of our interview gave me courage, and I plunged into a series of business-like questions, keeping my note-book prominently in use. In short, I spent a most delightful afternoon — the first of a series of daily visits. I was introduced to her cousin and his wife — blunt, hearty people — who added their hospitality to hers, and made me feel trebly welcome.

The remainder of the week passed on wings. I was due in New York on the 20th of October, and the 17th found me deliberating between taking the train home and telegraphing to Cassell for an extension of time.

At length, I resolved that Fate should decide this point for me, and I started out to the pleasant house on the prairie to pay my farewell visit, or a visit that would make farewell impossible.

I shall never forget that delightful afternoon, which lengthened through a glorious sunset into a cloudless, moonlight night. I had walked with Luella round the greater part of her possessions, and was impressed anew by their magnitude; and, after supper, we strolled to and fro on the prairie path, and talked confidingly. Rather, she seemed to have little to confide. Her young life was yet in bud. She spoke far more of the future than of the past. The thought of leaving her in that prairie solitude, and seeing her no more, began to assume the proportions of a cruel tragedy, as I

❖ Yarns from Puck. ❖

glanced sidewise at her sweet, appealing face, and felt the light pressure of her fingers on my arm. Half jesting I said, out of a silence that was making my heart beat strangely :



"I suppose when I come West again, in a year or so, I shall find you married, Luella?"

"Ye-es," she said softly, with a sort of fluttering, indrawn breath.

Down went my heart like lead.

"Why — you 're not — engaged?" I managed to stammer.

"No," she replied slowly; "but, I must marry;" and then she added, with singular irrelevancy, I thought: "I always spend my Winters in the city."

"Oh!" I said, trying to rally. "And, of course, you have many admirers there?"

"Yes," she said simply; "of course."

"And one, perhaps, who is especially dear?" I ventured to ask.

I thought her lip trembled.

"There's no one *there* I care for," she replied, looking away from me sadly.

"Yet, you speak — of — of being married." My lip was certainly trembling, and my voice also.

"What can I do?" she asked piteously; "you *see* how I am situated. If I had brothers or sisters, or even —"

I gave myself up for lost; and, with my right hand I took possession of the little fingers that clasped my left arm. They turned themselves warmly to meet my clasp; but at that instant an approaching figure, which we had been too absorbed to perceive, hailed us from the near distance.

"Hello! Is that you?" asked a rough voice.

As I did not know whether it was or not, I forbore to answer; but Luella called promptly: "Yes; what's the matter?"

"Telegraph for *him*," was the response, as the form came nearer. "Thought I'd holler along, an' let ye know."

The speaker was a ranchman with whom I had spent some conversational hours in the early part of my stay at Strykupp. I withdrew my hand from Luella's —

"A telegram for me! Let me see it."

"I ain't got it. It's to the hotel. But Bob seen it, and he reckoned I'd better hunt ye up and tell ye; an' he tole me to tell ye, ye best hurry back, in case you want to answer it. Mose, — the telegraph operator, — is goin' to a dance up creek, 'bout ten o'clock. Like as not he won't git back till to-morra mornin' — "

So Fate, indeed, had strangely interposed, and there was nothing for it but to say good night to Luella, with a murmured hope of meeting her on the morrow, and to start back to town with my envoy.

We chatted pleasantly as we trudged along in the moonlight, and I led the conversation at once to the subject of my thoughts.

"She's a right down nice little woman, an' no mistake," said Reub, heartily; "an' well fixed, I tell ye. Ol' man Curry, he might 'a' hed faults, but, all things kensidered, he done well by *her*. No mistake."

"It seems odd to call her a *woman*," I remonstrated; "she can't be over eighteen."

"She? She's risin' twenty, L'el Curry is. Why, lemme see. She were sixteen past, the fust time she were married."

"The first time — *what?*" I stood still in amazement.

"She runned away, the fust time," said Reub, impartially; "an' she were sixteen, then."

"Man, you don't mean to tell me that Luella Curry — is — was *married?* —"

Reub nodded. "Why, sir, for a fact; ain't you knowed it? Yes; course! Fust, she married Abie Sayres; runned away with him when she was a visitin' in Chicago — an' then they were divorced; an' then she married ol' man Curry, an' they divorced. I dunno whose fault 't was. She's a nice woman, L'ella is — *I* kensider her so."



"This is a surprise to me," I said, when I could say anything; "she never told me she was married."

"Lookin' out for another, mebbe. Likely 't is. I hearn she's goin' to Chicago this Winter. She always gets married when she goes to Chicago."

"And — are *both* her husbands living?" I asked.

"I guess they be. Abie Sayres, he never left her nothin'. He went East. She would n't go. That's how they come to sep'rate. But Currie; well, he sor a woman that suited him better; a widda 'bout his own age. Why, bless ye, he was good twenty years older 'n L'ella! So he jes' give her this place out an' out — jes' as ye see it."

I telegraphed to Cassell:

"Shall start East on the
5:30 train, to-morrow A. M."

My friend Bob, who always rose early on account of having to open the store, walked with me in the gray dawn to the station. As he wrung my hand at parting, he said significantly:

"Need n't say nothin'
about it, but dunno as I'll
keep store another year."

"How is that?" I asked, with interest.

"Wal, I'm thinkin' of makin' up a match with Luella Currie. She ain't bin married for quite a while back, an' I kinder guess she's agreeable — "



❖ Yarns from Puck. ❖

"Good-by, Bob," I said fervently; "here 's
the train. God bless you, my boy!"

"Good-by, old man!" said Bob.

Madeline S. Bridges.

THE JIGS OF ABNER PEABODY.



*"The misthress have sint me up
wid yer tay, sor'."*

THE JIGS OF ABNER PEABODY.



OBODY could dance more fluently than Abner Peabody. Time and place mattered little, so that he had inspiration in the form of music. He floated into a dance, then, as naturally as boarders float into the dining-room when the bell rings.

And speaking of boarders recalls the fact that Mr. Peabody was a favorite in his boarding-house. He was not a funny man, hardly a genial one; as a card-player he was ordinary; as a banjo-player he was a failure, mainly because he beat time so hard with his feet that he threw himself out of tune; he did not dress flagrantly; he was disposed to be reserved in speech and conduct; he did not give away many cigars; he seldom bought candy.

Nevertheless, the landlady liked him because he was a light eater of meat, and paid regularly; Bridget, the maid, liked him because she often found keys and pennies strewn about the floor, as if shaken from his pockets—though she always returned the keys; most of the boarders liked him because he was always willing to resign the last chop, and could be counted on to dance when

festivities occurred in the parlor; but two regarded him with dislike.

Emanuel Hennessy had taken offense at some strictures that Mr. Peabody once made as to the desirability of the 17th of March, and Matilda Greer was jealous of the landlady. Miss Greer



had come to an age when she no longer expected attentions from gentlemen, but by the same token she was exacting in the matter of food, and what she paid for she intended to have.

Things came to a pass one evening when chicken soup was announced for dinner. Miss Greer came late to table, and she was willing to make affidavit that the chicken in her soup was veal; but she had looked into Peabody's plate, and had seen feathers. (It should be remarked in parentheses that when the landlady discovered this cause of complaint, the soup was always afterward decorated from the pillows.) If there was any-

thing that Miss Greer disliked it was a partial boarding-house, and she said so that evening at the tiddledy-winks meeting in Miss Mulsifer's room. Oddly enough, on the same night, Mr. Hennessy had a rock-and-rye party in his chamber on the fourth floor back, and the sins of Mr. Peabody, in respect of the 17th of March, were laid before the body in their shameless daring.

Each of these conspirators held a quiet tongue at meals, a thing easy to do where there is work for jaws ; but kept a deal of thinking as to how Mr. Peabody might be reproved ; while he, poor innocent, continued to enjoy the favor of his keepers, and could call for a second plate of pie with a confidence that few others in the room either felt or affected.

Shortly after, in the middle of a dinner, Clara Casteyne, who had just been to Maillard's with her young man and had left her appetite there, began to practice on the piano in the parlor overhead. As the music struck into a brisk measure, Mr. Peabody was visibly agitated. His legs became restless and irresponsible, and he clung to his chair with one hand, while eagerly plying his knife with the other. At last he dropped the knife, arose, and with a blitheness of step that made the gravity of his face seem deeper, he went upstairs in time to the music, sighing regretfully all the way. This incident did not pass unnoticed by Miss Greer and Mr. Hennessy, and they commented on it when the other boarders had drifted away.

Discussion led to an exchange of confidences between them, and they were talking in low tones when the music stopped, and Mr. Peabody unex-

pectedly descended into the dining-room, and asked if he could have his dessert. The landlady brought it from the kitchen with her own hands, and set it before him, expressing a hope that he was not ill.

"Not at all, Madam. Only a turn—a few turns. I—ah—would regard it as a favor, Madam, if Miss Casteyne would practice before dinner."

"I will speak to her. Do you like the shortcake?"

"Excellent, Madam."

"She gave him five," muttered Miss Greer, at the other end of the table.

"Five pieces?" gasped Mr. Hennessy.

"No; berries."

"I'll wager it's two more than any of the rest of us had," grumbled Mr. Hennessy.

"She's actually giving him a second plate," said Miss Greer, starting to her feet. "It's favoritism; that's what it is."

A hard light came into her eyes; she flung out of the room, and half a minute later the piano was going again. As the air of

"The Irish Washerwoman" rang

out, Mr. Peabody groaned and tried to finish his second helping of shortcake; but though he used his utmost speed, his agitation increased so fast that the spoon fell from his fingers, he sprang to his feet, and went careering up the stairs.

After the door had shut, a rhythmic jar was audible in his room, and the china vases on his



Yarns from Puck.

mantel could be heard to jingle. "The Irish Washerwoman" was rollicking from the piano louder and more briskly than ever. Bridget presently knocked at the Peabody chamber, and asked:

"Is it sick ye are, sor?"

"Nope," came in a labored tone from within.

"The mistress have sint me up wid yer tay, sor."

"All — right. Come — in."

As Bridget opened the door, she was so astonished that the tea-cup almost fell from her hand, for Mr. Peabody had thrown off his coat, kicked his shoes into opposite corners, and was removing his necktie while dancing furiously. His face was sorrowful and sweaty.

"It is — quite warm," he puffed, still dancing. "Will you — please open the — window? Thanks. I would — like that tea-he — very mu-u-u-ch, if I — thought I could manage; —" and with an all-hands-around movement he caught the cup as he passed, and tried to drink; but at that instant the player in the parlor started afresh, louder and livelier than ever, and Mr. Peabody, keeping time, spilled half of the tea on his trousers.

"Dear! Dear! It 's quite — unpleasant! Whew! But I really can not — take it while — I 'm going — on like this — at least, from a — cup. Do you sup-pose there 's — a nursing-bottle — in the house?"

"I 'll see, sir."

"And who — is play-ing on the — piano, this time?"

“ Miss Greer, sor.”

“ O-o-oh! Why will she — do it?”

“ I don’t know, sor. Will I bring yer tay in a bottle, sor?”

“ If — you — please.”

And it was so administered. These facts were drawn from Bridget by a limited but judicious outlay of coin and sympathy after the piano had become silent, about nine o’clock. At breakfast next morning “The Irish Washerwoman” broke forth again with vicious energy. Mr. Peabody, taken unaware, was seized with a jig at the table, and his coffee went into the hash. He was confused by the stern regard of Mr. Hennessy, and assuming a calm that he did not feel, he tried to eat deliberately; but as his feet were dancing under the table his movements were erratic, and twice he dipped marmalade into the bosom of his shirt. At last, as he was rising, with a groan, the music stopped and he sadly finished his meal.

The November elections were at hand, and it was well known that Mr. Peabody was not without a hope of being able to serve his country as an alderman. He needed the place, because the hosiery trade, in which he was embarked, had been suffering depression. As a matter of fact, he received the Republican nomination, and, as the Second Ward was strongly Republican, the district boss told him that he was as good as elected, and assessed him two hundred dollars for campaign expenses. But there was an obstacle of which he had not wotted. He had never dreamed of wotting it. This obstacle was Mr. Hennessy. That gentleman had called at the office of the Democratic committee and had

spent an hour in secret converse with the owner of the city, with results that apparently put Mr. Hennessy into a state of content.

Two nights before election a meeting was held in Pentagon Square to indorse the candidates, the platform being enlivened with lanterns, bunting and orators. There were also a throng and twenty dollars' worth of fireworks.

When Mr. Peabody's turn came to address the multitude, he was allowed barely time to allude to the Constitution, and the grand old war-horse of the party who had just spoken, before a band, concealed in the crowd, disclosed itself with "The Irish Washerwoman," played *forte* and *scherzo*. Mr. Peabody jumped, his jaw fell and his eyes started. Then he clutched the rail, but he could not keep himself down. He began to dance.

"Hold my legs!" he said, in a loud and urgent whisper to the grand old war-horses of the party who sat behind him; but the horses did not move; in fact, one of them said, audibly, that the misuse of liquor was to be regretted.

"Hold my legs, will you?" repeated Mr. Peabody, hanging to the rail, and now dancing so high that his coat-tails came to the level of his ears.

"Oh, will some of you stop me, or else stop that band?" he continued, with anger now mingled in his regret.

But none seemed to understand the situation, and as the music continued faster and faster, the dance went on with greater fury, Mr. Peabody clinging to the bar and occasionally reaching such an elevation that his legs, hanging in space,



seemed to form with his arms an inverted letter V. The populace gazed with surprise at his actions, and several people ventured remarks of disapproval. The beating of Mr. Peabody's feet on the boards raised a dust that made the war-horses cough.

Suddenly, a voice was heard above the din of the band and dance: "Ye'll cast asper-r-rsions on the Sivinteenth of March, will ye, ye milk-livered devil? Dance, now, to a good old St. Pathrick's Day tune. Jig it lively."

"Is that — you, Hen-nessy?" cried Mr. Peabody, with a shuffle and a jump. "Get 'em — to stop it, that 's — a good fel-low."

"I 'm not a good fellow to the like of you. Dance, will you! Look at that, now!" he added in affected admiration as the soloist on the platform almost flung a somersault.

❖ Yarns from Puck. ❖

"It's a conspiracy!" panted Mr. Peabody. "I hope, gentle-men, that — you will not consider me guilty — of frivolous con-duct. Please, kill that — band. The fact — is, my father and mother were dancing tea-chers, and I — was born at — a ball. My birth-mark — is jigs. Where — are the po-lice? I did — hope that — I should be — able to get through — this campaign without — making an ex-hibition of myself; but it is impos-sible for me to hear music — without dancing — so the — mischief is done, and Hennessey — has done it.

The music stopped. Mr. Peabody stopped. He was not elected.

C. S. Montgomery.



THE CAREER OF A SOCIETY
ACTRESS.



“The ‘English Society Queen’.”

THE CAREER OF A SOCIETY ACTRESS.

TOLD IN CABLE DISPATCHES AND PARAGRAPHS.

SPECIAL CABLE DISPATCH FROM LONDON.



IN the breach-of-promise case brought by the Hon. Mrs. Winkerton Getthere against Lord Algernon Rocks, the jury yesterday awarded the fair plaintiff £10,000 damages. The story that Mrs. Getthere intends to star in a piece written expressly for her is indignantly denied by the lady's friends, who include such people as the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Winks, Lord Malodor, Captain Seesaw Fowraces, late of the Guards, and Lady Queer.

SPECIAL CABLE DISPATCH, No. 2.

Mr. Benjamin Lively Hustle, of the well-known American firm of managers, Hustle & Hardup, yesterday signed a contract with the Hon. Mrs. Winkerton Getthere, for a ten weeks' tour in America. Mrs. Getthere will star in a play written expressly for her by a leading play-

wright, and founded on Mrs. Getthere's recent romantic and interesting experiences in Society and the courts. The distinguished lady stated to your correspondent, yesterday, that she had consented to take this important step, not for the sake of pecuniary gain, but in order that she might vindicate her honor as a woman. Mr. Hustle declares that he heard his new star read "Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night," at Lady Malodor's garden party, and is confident that he has secured a second Neilson. He believes that



the amount of interest awakened in America by the printed reports of the persecutions to which this sainted lady has been subjected, will insure for her large audiences from the start.

FROM THE *Morning Howler*.

Manager Hardup and a hundred invited guests, including a great many well-known journalists and members of the dramatic profession, went down the Bay yesterday to welcome the Hon. Mrs. Winkerton Getthere, who arrived on

the City of Hoboken, accompanied by Manager Hustle, who will give his personal attention to her forthcoming American tour. The new star was attired in a plaid traveling suit, which set off her figure to the best advantage. She welcomed the Press representatives and other of Manager Hardup's guests with a gracious *savoir faire* which stamped her at once as one of the *recherché monde* of which she has long been a distinguished ornament.

"I am more than delighted with America," said the famous Society Queen, when an opportunity offered for a quiet chat with the reporter. "As for my art — well, *you* must be judges of that; but, then, you Americans are so generous and brave that I know you will be kind to a woman who has suffered so terribly as I have."



The tears came to her eyes as she uttered these words; but she dashed them away with a quick motion of her hand, and said, with a smile of exquisite, winning sweetness:

"Now, let us choose some brighter, happier topic for conversation — my new dresses for ex-

⁂ Hanks; ⁂

ample. They are all from Worth's, and are simply dreams of delight. There is one of pale green, which I shall wear in the second act of 'Stainless and Free,' that I think is the loveliest thing I ever saw."

Mrs. Getthere will appear at Messrs. Hustle & Hardup's handsome theatre on the 30th inst., in her new play, "Stainless and Free," which depicts in a vivid manner many of the exciting scenes in the much maligned lady's career.

PRESS COMMENTS FROM THE PAPERS OF THE 31ST.

FROM THE *Morning Scrocher.*

A certain Mrs. Winkerton Getthere appeared last night at Messrs. Hustle & Hardup's Theatre, in what that enterprising firm of managers have the audacity to describe as a "comedy drama," and which served admirably as a vehicle for the display of the lady's incompetency and vulgarity. Nothing but the charity of the audience saved her and her comedy drama from being hissed from the stage.

FROM THE *Daily Screamer.*

We have had English actresses before this, and bad ones, too; but never before has a human automaton of Mrs. Getthere's calibre ventured to appear before a New York audience. Even the large assemblage of deadheads thinned out perceptibly before the three acts of what she calls her play were finished.

Owing to the indulgence of the audience,

❖ Yarns from Puck. ❖

Mrs. Getthere was allowed to occupy the stage until the bitter end. The new "English Society Queen" is a miracle of incompetence, and the sooner she returns to the exalted circles of which —according to the advertisements—she has long



been a distinguished ornament, the better it will be for the American Stage.

FROM THE *Daily Puffer*.

Art has its limitations.

A beautiful woman has none.

Mrs. Winkerton Getthere, roaming like a graceful gazelle through the flower-strewn meads of rhetoric of which "Stainless and Free" is composed, is like a breath from the far-off Spice Islands.

When she speaks, we hear the voice of peerless Adelaide Neilson. When she walks, or, rather, glides across the stage, we see before us, in the flesh, the realization of the dream of a Greek artist.

And yet we doubt if Mrs. Getthere's divine art will appeal to the great ruck of humanity who pour into our play-houses, reeking with the in-

❖ **hanks;** ❖

toxicating perfumes of Sardou, and with the hideous din of Bartley Campbell still ringing in their ears.

Be that as it may, Mrs. Getthere's *début* last night was an artistic event which will long be remembered.

PRESS COMMENTS.

(Arranged by Messrs. Hustle & Hardup, for use
"On the Road.")

READ WHAT THE NEW YORK PAPERS
SAY OF ENGLAND'S PEERLESS
SOCIETY QUEEN!

The Scorcher says: "A comedy drama which served admirably as a display for the lady."

The Daily Screamer says: "The new English Society Queen is a miracle."

The Daily Puffer says: "Mrs. Getthere's *début* last night was an artistic event which will long be remembered."

FROM THE *Evening Ghost* (TWO WEEKS LATER).

Another English "Society Actress," so called, has come to grief, to the great surprise of her managers, one of whom remarked, with charming naïveté to a reporter, that, although he had "worked her London scandal for all it was worth, still you could n't club people up to the box-office." When Mr. Hustle was asked what he thought of her acting, he made answer: "Act! Why, I guess she can act alongside of most of them Society amateurs; but we did n't figure on that at all. We supposed, of course, that this

business about Rocks — and we had the Duke of Winks scandal to fall back on — would pull people into the house like an exhaust pump. But the popular taste is fickle, and the lady was a frost from the word go."

It is positively refreshing to read these breezy words. It is delightful to think that although the "lady," as Mr. Hustle calls her, came to us with the prestige of two aristocratic scandals, still the discerning



American public could not be "clubbed up to the box-office." And while we can not refrain from admiring the tireless energy and ingenuity with which our two famous managers "worked the London scandal for all it was worth," still our pity for them is drowned in the delightful reflection that the play-going public is emerging from swaddling clothes, and putting on the toga of manhood and wisdom.

FROM THE *Morning Howler* (TWO WEEKS LATER).

The Hon. Mrs. Winkerton Getthere sailed yesterday on the Anchoria. It is rumored that her passage money was paid with a check signed by Mr. Palmidays Broke, acting treasurer of the Actors' Fund.

J. L. Ford.

THE STORY
OF SHIFTLESS SMITH.



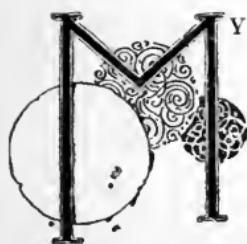
*"I could n't sit still and tell it,
but I had to walk the floor and act
as though I was going through the
whole thing again."*

THE STORY OF SHIFTLESS SMITH.

IROQUOIS HOTEL,

BUFFALO, N. Y., November 4th, 18—.

Y DEAR WIFE:



When you get this long letter you will be astonished to see that I am away out here in Buffalo; and when I tell you how I came to be here and what I am doing here, I am afraid you will not believe me. You will say I am out of my head. But all I shall tell you, my dear wife, is perfectly true.

For some time before I left home I had been nearly distracted from thinking of our condition there on the farm; of how I had let the property dwindle away, a few acres every year, until there was so little of it left that there seemed to be nothing ahead of us but the poor-house.

Everybody said it was on account of my laziness, and I suppose they were right. But oh! how many times I have tried to overcome that hatred of mine for farm work. I would start out in the morning full of firm resolve, but when I would sit down on the log under the cherry-tree by the well for a moment's rest, the children

would see me from across the street; and when they came over, I would begin telling them stories, and fool and play with them while you went about your housework with a solemn face, looking at me from time to time, but saying nothing. And afterward, all my morning resolutions melted away. I would get an old book and read, read, read until the sun got low.



I saw this Fall that my miserable little crops would not keep us through half the Winter. I did not know what could be done. I told you that I would go to Bridgeport and try to find work in the shops there.

I did go to Bridgeport, but they laughed at me. What could they do with an old farmer like me? So I thought I would try South Norwalk; but I got on a fast express train by mistake and was carried through to New York.

You never can think how I felt when I found myself in that big city. It was getting late, and I put up in a cheap lodging-house for the night.

Next morning, my first thought was to get away from New York. I was an object of ridicule, I felt, because of my long hair and my outlandish clothes. I was pointed at and laughed at everywhere.

I was walking hurriedly toward the railroad station when some one touched me on the arm and asked me if he could speak with me a minute.

"I don't think you can have any business with me," I said.

"That will depend upon yourself altogether," he replied; "but if 't will not be giving offence, I'll state the business I'd *like* to have with you."

"You're right," said I, "to take me for a countryman; but you are wrong if you think I don't read the papers. The trouble with me has always been that I read too much. Now, I have just fifty cents," said I, "and these old clothes."

The man laughed and put his hand on my shoulder.

"Ye make my business easy," he said, with a sort of brogue. "'T is the clothes that arrested my attention, sir; I want them."

I thought he was making fun of me and turned to go on; but he would not let me. To make the story short, I found that he was in earnest, and did want my old clothes for some special use. I agreed to let him have them, and he took me to a clothing store where I exchanged them for a new suit, new shoes, a new hat and a white shirt. He paid the bill.

When I was dressed in the new clothes the man looked at me with a jolly twinkle in his eye.

"'T is all in the duds," said he. "With the clothes you've shed I'll make an actor, and with those you've just put on I've made another. Get a shave and a bit of a clip with the scissors around the neck, my boy, and ye'll be the picture of Mister Jeffson. Good-by — good loock."

He shook my hand and left me. I was sorry to part with him; I think we could have had



some fun together. A hundred miles from home and no way to get back but to walk. No money, no work, and Winter coming on; all these things on my mind, and yet I could have told stories and cracked jokes with this stranger for half a day if he had given me the chance. The old story, Martha.

I took the man's advice and got shaved; and the barber trimmed my hair just a little. This took thirty-five of my fifty cents. Perhaps I ought not to have spent the money, but with my new clothes I thought I needed the trimming up.

No one guyed me after this, but people noticed me a good deal in a different way. Most of those I met turned their heads to look at me; some halted, as though they recognized my face; two or three well-dressed gentlemen bowed and touched their hats. I did the same, and could not help but think what my friend had said: "T is all in the duds."

Then I turned toward the station, and my spirits were down again. Dressed like a gentleman, it seemed hard to have to walk so many miles on the track. "I don't believe this Mr. Jeffson, who looks like me, would do that," I thought; and it made me laugh to think how I might be taken for him while walking on the ties. It is strange that I will have these light thoughts, no matter what trouble I may be in.

Some ladies, dressed in silks and furs, passed out of the station-door and smiled and bowed as they stepped into their carriage, but I did not realize that they were bowing to me until they were gone. I was considering whether I had



better ride a little way or begin my walk at once, and save the fifteen cents for sandwiches. How I dreaded that walk!

I raised my head, and over near where the carriage had stood I saw a little white card lying on the walk. I stepped over and picked it up. It was a ticket to Buffalo. I suppose one of the ladies had dropped it. Of course, I could not find the lady, and I did not think of such a thing as selling the ticket, although I have learned since that I might easily have done so.

I decided to go to Buffalo. I could ride there in less time than I could walk to South Norwalk. I could find work in one place as easily as in the other. I could send you money from Buffalo as well as from Norwalk, I thought. I suppose it was a foolish thing to do, but no one knows better than you do, Martha, that I would be all the more likely to do it on that account.

I walked to the train and found every seat filled. I was passing into what they call a parlor-car, when a conductor asked me if I had a seat ticket, and I was obliged to tell him — no.

But just then a man who was stepping out turned to the conductor and said: "Let the gentleman have my seat. I can not go on this train. I am called back to the city." He had a telegraph-message in his hand.

"I am very much obliged to you, sir," I said; but I did not know that he had paid two dollars for the seat, or I should not have taken it so freely.

"You are quite welcome to the seat," he said, and he turned directly toward me for the first time. He was more of a city-raised man than I am, and perhaps he was a little older, but we looked almost exactly alike. I knew that he must be Mr. Jeffson. It was plain that he did not know who I was, though, for he seemed surprised enough, and turned twice to look at me before he passed back into the waiting-room.

We had a splendid ride to Buffalo. I sat in my easy-chair by a great, wide window and looked out at the beautiful Hudson River, and the mountains still covered with all the colors of the Autumn foliage; and we moved along so swiftly and silently that I seemed to be flying through a new world. I thought it was not much like going a-foot to South Norwalk.

There were half a dozen children in the car, and you can imagine that I made friends with them quickly with my stories and nonsensical talk that all children love so well.

When the train began to wind around through Buffalo, the passengers put on their coats and wraps and chatted pleasantly, glad to be near their journey's end. The children came to say good-by, and I kissed them all.

One of the mothers shook hands with me, too, and thanked me for making the long day pass so pleasantly for the little ones.

When the train had come to a stop, I stepped off the car and stood looking up and down the station, not knowing where to go, when a gentleman rushed up and took me by the hand.

"Ah, you *did* come!" said he. "I got your telegram; but I knew you'd be here if you could. Got to hurry up now — come along — I'll explain in a minute!"

He hurried me along to a carriage, got in with me and told the driver to go to the Iroquois Hotel. "You've saved the snap," he said. "Fact is, Mr. Jeffson, that boy of yours is awfully clever, you know, and all that — but he's just dead rattled, sir; and though he's got the business down fine, he ain't in any shape to understudy *you*, sir — not in Buffalo, anyway. Wait till we get to Erie to try him!"

I tried two or three times to tell him of his mistake, but he kept talking so fast, and the carriage made so much noise, that I thought I would explain it all when we reached the hotel.

As soon as we got into the lighted rooms, he looked at me surprised, and exclaimed:

"Why, this is n't Mr. Jeffson!"

"I know it," said I; "it is Obed Smith."

He kept looking at me and saying he was damned. He said it fifteen or twenty times. He could not seem to think of anything else to say for some minutes; then he began to ask questions.



I told him everything that had happened to me since I left home; about my adventures in Bridgeport and New York; about the man who had got my clothes; about finding the ticket to Buffalo and meeting Mr. Jefferson on the train, and all the rest. You know how I tell such things, Martha. You know what a *dern* monkey fool I am. I could n't sit still and tell it, but I had to walk the floor and act as though I was going through the whole thing again. The man quit damning, and laughed harder and harder as I went on with the story. When I had finished, he slapped me on the back.

"Ned Larrigan made the mistake of his life," said he, "when he took your clothes instead of yourself. You are a born actor, Smith."

You remember, Martha, that as much as ten years ago you found me in the barn one day reading a play. It was a play that had for its principal character a jolly, worthless old fellow — as worthless as I was myself. You found me, not only reading the play, but trying to act this old fellow's part. And that was the first and only time you ever upbraided me for my laziness and neglect of the farm. Your words stung and shamed me, and I threw the book away, but I never forgot it. I seemed to love that miserable fellow, somehow or another, and I could n't get him out of my mind.

Well, when this man said I was a born actor, I thought of that.

The man was looking at me curiously. "If you knew anything about Trip Twinkle," said he, "I think you could play the part. You seem to have been a sort of Trip Twinkle yourself."

My heart gave a jump at these words, for he had named the old vagabond himself.

"I do know it, by heart," I said.

The man started and said he was damned again. Then he got excited and clapped my hat on my head and grabbed me by the arm and rushed me out of the hotel to the theatre. He got his actors there, too, and made me go through the play with them. Then it was time for the performance to begin, and we went through it again before a big audience. I played old Trip Twinkle, and I guess by what the papers said the next morning that I played it all right. It seems that a good many at first wanted their money back if they could not see Jeffson; but by the time the play was half over they were stamping their feet and clapping their hands and calling for me to come before the curtain. The papers say that Mr. Jeffson's substitute gave them an entirely new Trip Twinkle, with a new manner and a new accent; but that he was a wonderfully realistic actor and his performance was a triumph. They could learn nothing about him and he was not to be found after the performance. It was said that he had fainted and had left the theatre in a very weak state.

That was true; but a big beefsteak and some fried onions fixed me all right. I had n't eaten anything since a roll that I bought at six o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Jeffson came the next day, and last



•  **Hanks;** 

night he played the part himself; but I am engaged to stay with the company. If I should name the salary I get, you would not believe *anything* I have told you; but twenty dollars goes with this; and next week I will send twenty more. And twenty every week till April. If you still doubt, you will have to wait two months. Then we are to be in New Haven, and I can see you and convince you that your shiftless, worthless old husband tells the truth.

I've got to work hard if I'm going to act, they say; but I don't feel any lump in my throat. I think I *can* work at *this*.

Write me at Cleveland, Ohio, care of the Weddell House, and tell me all the news.

Your loving husband,

OBED SMITH.

P. S.—I don't know what we will do by and by, Martha, but for the present take things a little easier. Don't bother to nail more boards on that old hen-house; you've had trouble enough with that. Sell the hens.

C. H. Augur.

A FIN DE SIÉCLE GENIE;
OR,
ARABIAN NIGHTS UP TO DATE.



“ ‘What will Monsieur have?’ ”

A FIN DE SIÈCLE GENIE;

OR,

ARABIAN NIGHTS UP TO DATE.



ABDUL KARTAH was blasé. There is no use attempting to disguise the fact. He was born in Damascus, had been brought up in Damascus, and was Damascene to the backbone. That alone was enough to make a man blasé, for Damascus is one of the oldest cities on earth. But Abdul Kartah had tasted the cup of life. He had even drunk it to the dregs, and looked closely at the bottom to see if there was any more left. He had made up his mind that there was not, when one day at the flower market he saw Marshmallah.

She was a flower girl from some fourteen-syllabled village near the Red Sea, and from time immemorial flower-girls have been destructive of the peace of gentlemen of high degree. As soon as he had seen Marshmallah, Abdul was a changed man. No more did he go to the hanging gardens at night, listen to the low, lascivious

tooting of the bulbul, smoke hookahs and drink palm-tree wine, which, you will remember, Xenophon says is "exceedingly headachy." No more did he go out for midnight rides on the Jerusalem mule tramway. He even gave up polo and abjured checkers at a dollar a game.

Abdul swore off generally, and took to expending his monthly allowance of rupees, scudi, piastres, or whatever they call them, on yellow chrysanthemums and hot-house violets. Marshmallah liked it first-rate, and began to have visions of a sealskin peplum (or some such garment) and a team of donkeys. But about this time old

Kunnel Kartah, Abdul's father, rose up and said in his beard :

"There 's something wrong with Ab; he 's reformed."

So the old man, not having a grand vizir (because they went out of fashion along with califs), sent for his private secretary and said to him :

"Pete,"—the secretary was an Englishman and his name was Peter Thompson—"Pete, what 's up with Ab?"

"Don't know," said Pete; "but I'll find out."

That evening Peter returned and looked seriously at Kunnel Kartah.

"Well, what is it?" said the old man; "speak out."

"Mashed," said Peter, sententiously.

"Mashed! Is she rich?"

"No. Flower-girl."

"O Allah!" exclaimed Kunnel Kartah;



"this comes of being a member of an old blue-blooded family that goes back to the days of the Sultan Sahib. The princes always were spooning on the wrong girls. Well, well; get down the oracle and let 's see what the idiots did under the circumstances."

Peter went to the book-case and got down



a magnificent unexpurgated edition of "Arabian Nights." Kunnel Kartah thumbed the index.

"Um—um—ah, here it is; page 327. Um—um—they sent the prince to a desert isle where there were no women, to stay until he reached the age of discretion. What blooming rot!"

"Well, sir," said Peter; "Abdul ought to have reached the age of discretion; but it seems that he has n't, and I think that foreign travel would be a good thing for him. He 'd forget this silly flower-girl business."

"I don't know but you 're right," said

Kunnel Kartah. "We 'll try it. Go down and get a ticket to Calcutta, and we 'll pack him off on to-morrow's steamer."

Peter left the house, and just before dinner Abdul came in.

"Well, sir," said his father; "what have you to say for yourself? Fallen in love with a flower-girl, eh?"

Abdul started and then salaamed very low.

"Commander of the Faithful," he began, but his father shouted:

"Don't you commander-of-the-faithful me, you blockhead! I won't have it! It's out of date!"

"Well, guv'nor, Marshmallah is a good girl, and I'm sure if you would only see her, you 'd love her yourself."

"Ah-h-h! I don't want to love her! Confound your impudence! You go and pack your trunk. You start for India to-morrow."

Abdul knew that there was no escape, and he did as he was ordered. He contrived to send a message to Marshmallah, assuring her of his eternal constancy, and received an answer begging him not to keep her waiting too long, as she had other advantageous offers. He sailed away the next day on a Mediterranean fruit steamer that carried three passengers. They had not left the Red Sea when a big storm arose, and the vessel was wrecked on a small island. Abdul, who could swim like a wild duck, was the only person who escaped. He was cast by a huge wave upon a rock, where he clung until the tempest subsided.

When Abdul regained his senses, he mourned grievously over his misfortune, for the island had the appearance of being uninhabited. He arose and began to move forward in the hope of finding a place more inviting than the rocks, when he beheld a curious growth upon the side of a tree. It looked like a box with a crank protrud-



ing from the side. He turned the crank and a bell rang. Then he heard a hollow voice saying:

“Hello! hello!”

Abdul staggered and rubbed his eyes, fearing that he dreamed. But again the voice said:

“Hello! What’s that?”

“Sir,” answered Abdul; “I know not who you are, nor whence you speak.”

“You blooming chump!” exclaimed the voice; “did you never see a telephone before? What are you — shipwrecked?”

"Sir, I am, indeed, a shipwrecked voyager."
"First turn to the left beyond the rocks till you come to the gate. Good-by."

Abdul, marvelling greatly, set forward on his path. Turning as the voice had bidden him, he came to a gate covered with green cloth. He knocked, but none answered. Then perceiving a small knob at one side, he laid hold of it, when instantly a bell rang within. He started back in alarm as the gate opened and a man appeared.

"Holy ginger!" exclaimed the man; "another case of shipwreck!"

"Sir," said Abdul; "I perceive that you are a person of understanding."

"You bet your boots! Here, take this, and when you need anything, rub it."

And the gatekeeper handed Abdul a gold ring.

"Now come in. Don't stand out there," said the gatekeeper.

Abdul entered, and found himself in the court-yard of a spacious and magnificent palace. He looked about him, and found that the gatekeeper had departed. He went forward, and entered an apartment of inviting aspect. He sat down and gazed about him. On one side of the room was a bookcase, filled with the latest stories of Kipling, De Maupassant, Stevenson, Howells, Crawford, and other writers of whom Abdul had never heard. On a large table were all the leading magazines and weeklies of England, France and the United States. On another side was a buffet laden with California grapes and other fruits, and with bottles of various sizes and colors. Abdul folded his hands and rubbed them gently

in his satisfaction. He unconsciously rubbed the ring. Instantly he heard a rumbling sound, and looking in the direction whence it came, saw a sort of car rise till it was opposite a door. The door opened, and a man stepped forward. He wore a swallow-tailed coat, and carried a napkin over his arm. He bowed and said:

"What will Monsieur have? We are your servants, I and the other slaves of the ring."

"Allah is great," said Abdul; "my stomach is uneasy with salt water."

"Monsieur should try a crème de menthe."

"A what?"

"A crème de menthe — Paris-green cocktail."

The man stepped to the buffet and returned with a glass full of something green, which he gave to Abdul to drink.

"Allah is great — greater than I thought," said Abdul, looking at the empty glass with much respect. "And now, friend, who are you, and where am I?"

"Don't you know? Why, where on earth do you come from?"

"Even from Damascus."

"Oh, that's worse than Philadelphia. They're centuries behind the times in Damascus."

"Not so. We have a faro bank and a mule tramway."

"Gee-whizz, man! Why, have you any opium dens, or policy shops, or cable railways, or electric rapid-transit lines, or pool rooms, or roof-garden concerts?"

"I know not what these things may be."

"Well, then, you're not in it!"

“Not in what?”

“Oh — not in the century! You’re not *fin de siècle*. Now, as for me, why, I’m the king of the genii.”

“The what?”

“King of the genii. I’ve been running this island ever since the old original sultan sent his son here to live out of sight of women till he was twenty-one. You must have read about it in the ‘Arabian Nights.’”

“Then that was true?”

“You bet your sweet life! Why, that’s Aladdin’s ring you’re wearing!”

“But those things told in the tales of Scheherazade were all impossible.”

“Yes, they were then; but not now. Why, with steam, electricity and cheek, we can do things that her royal nibs would n’t have dared to tell Schahariar!”

“Then you may be able to aid me.”

“I can. I know what’s the matter. You are in love with a flower-girl or something of that sort, and your sire has sent you off to get cured. Of course, you came ashore here. They all do. We get them. That’s what we are here for. We’re running a retreat for eligible sons who are in danger of contracting mésalliances.”

“Oh, but you must not help me that way. I do not wish to be cured of my love. I want my Marshmallah.”

“Well, you’re going to get your Marshmallah. That’s the cure.”

“I don’t quite understand.”

“You will after you’ve been married two or three months.”

Yarns from Puck.

So saying, the genie pressed a button and a messenger appeared. The genie wrote out a brief message and handed it to the messenger, saying:

“Take your electro-magnetic flying-machine and carry that message to Damascus. Bring back the girl, or an answer. Rush now!”

Three hours later the answer came. It read thus:

“Marshmallah Mul Kahi, Sister of the Nightingale, Daughter of the Moon, and Cousin of the Date-palm, presents her compliments to Abdul Kartah and begs leave to inform him that she has just accepted an offer of £200 per week to appear in London in a new comic opera. The manager guarantees that she shall marry a real lord at the end of the season. She regrets, therefore, that she must indefinitely postpone her uncertain engagement with Abdul Kartah.”

Abdul burst into tears, and handed the note to the genie to read.

“Phew!” exclaimed he. “Young man, the sex, as you perceive, is always *fin de siècle*.”

“What shall I do, then? My life is now hopeless; but let me at least become *fin de siècle* before I die.”

“You are sure that you have nothing else to live for?”

“Yes,” said Abdul, sadly.

The genie went to the book-shelves and got down complete editions of the works of W. D. Howells and of Henry James.

“There,” said the genie; “find the soul in these, and the plots in those, and you’ll be the *fin de sièclest* man on the face of the earth.”

⁂ hanks; ⁂

Abdul Kartah withered with the grapes in
the golden Autumn.

W. J. Henderson.



THE MOSQUITOVILLE CLUB.



"Won't you have a drop of whiskey
in it?"

THE MOSQUITOVILLE CLUB.



WHEN it was first proposed to have a club in the quiet, sleepy little town of Mosquitoville, the entire population declared itself greatly pleased.

Mosquitoville was what might be termed at once a religious and a sporting town. It contained spots that were noted for their piety, and spots that might be characterized as directly the opposite; and it may seem strange, at first, that two elements so heterogeneous as the religious and sporting factions of Mosquitoville should meet upon common ground, and declare the Mosquitoville Club an institution without which Mosquitoville could never hope to become a centre of refinement and social life.

The pious people looked with favor upon the club only because it would enable them to find a golden opportunity for the exercise of their efforts to suppress intemperance. On the other hand, the people who drank rationally saw at once a splendid chance to labor with the prohibition cranks, and to use their best endeavors to cause them to shake off the galling fetters of water, in

which the demon Typhoid lingers to lure men on to destruction and death.

While each element was making preparations to save the other, and, while each was totally unaware of the fact that it was about to be rescued and placed upon the pedestal of life and happiness, the Mosquitoville Club was duly formed and ushered into existence. When the people met at the club, it was pleasant to note the pains with which they attempted to be polite and courteous to each other; for each one was bent upon saving



his brother, and unaware of his brother's intention toward himself.

"I should think that that whiskey would consume your insides," a prohibition light would remark.

"It is really not so apt to injure one as that cold, clammy lemonade you are now imbibing," the drinker would reply. "Won't you have a drop of whiskey in it, to take the chilly edge off?"

"Thank you very much," the prohibition advocate would reply, "but I can not consistently

accept. I will put some of my lemonade in your whiskey, if you will have it."

"Certainly," the drinker would remark. "To show you that I am not at all prejudiced against this impressionistic beverage, I will accept."

Thereupon the pious soul would put some lemonade into the blue-grass whiskey of the sinner, which the latter would drink with an expression of well dissembled delight.

"I tell you," the drinker would remark, in a soft, missionary tone; "temperance is a truly beautiful thing, when not carried to excess. But alcohol is also a good thing in its place. Like water, it should be taken with great discretion. I am willing to admit that alcohol sometimes ruins the digestion, and sometimes aids and strengthens it; occasionally it destroys the appetite, and occasionally it improves it. If I were stout and had a purple countenance, I would pin my faith to water; if I were sallow and cadaverous, I would shun water as I would poison. You do not look over-strong. Permit me to send you a bottle of blue-grass, to be taken as a tonic. And, while you imbibe it as a medicine, I will agree to confine myself entirely to your favorite tipple, water."

"I could n't enter into such an agreement," the prohibitionist would reply; "but I must admit the fairness of your proposed bargain. If I could keep you on water for a month, I might have the satisfaction of knowing you as one of my converts; but, on the other hand, I might take such a liking to the liquids which I now avoid, that I could not shake off the desire for them. I appreciate the kind interest you take in me; and will tell you that my hatred and fear of rum are based

upon the fact that I had several uncles and two grandfathers who lived and died in the chains of the demon."

"I can feel for you," the other would say softly; "but in my case it was entirely different; all my uncles and both my grandfathers were strict prohibitionists; and I have been drinking all my life. Yet I have never been drunk. You can drink rationally, if you will, just as I do; and I will suggest a plan upon which we can meet half way. We will split a bottle of ginger ale with a glass of whiskey in it. That will be a mixture of prohibition and tolerance that ought to fill any fair-minded man with joy."

The prohibitionist concluded to meet his fallen brother half way, in the hope of being able to save him ultimately, and, at the same time, let him see that he was liberal. So they split the ginger ale and whiskey, and became like brothers, each one feeling that he was leading the other into the light, until the sinner had to lead the prohibitionist home.

Shortly after the club was established, the factions would meet separately and apart to report progress.

At the prohibition headquarters, an ancient deacon would remark:

"I saw Col. Smith drink a glass of ginger pop at the club to-day, and his eye looked clear and indicated a great falling off in the Colonel's consumption of alcoholic liquids."

"Old Jason Funk left half his beer in his glass," another great teetotaler would say; "and that means a good deal for old Jason."



❖ Yarns from Puck. ❖

And at the other headquarters a broker would say:

"I reasoned with elder Bullfinch for three hours to-day, before I could get him to put a little claret in his lemonade. He seemed to like it, and by unflagging perseverance I hope to get him to the point of drinking a claret-punch in a week and a straight whiskey in a month. The elder is a pretty good man at heart, and is quite worthy of being saved and raised from his present ignominious position in the community. The associations of youth and early training are the causes of his loyalty to the coy enchantress that steals away his brains and digestion, and makes a monkey of him."

"Only a week ago," a merchant would remark, "I felt a brotherly compassion and sympathy for Jonathan Squidmire. I detected him in the act of sipping water from a clam-shell at the town pump. I remembered the services he rendered at the public school fire, and my heart went out to him, for I felt that he was too good and pure to wear the shackles of total abstinence and thus be alienated from us. So I gave the boy who delivers the morning papers, twenty-five cents to go around to his kitchen door and pour half a pint of whiskey in the pail of milk. I knew this would benefit him, because he has weak lungs. I have had the act repeated several times, each time increasing the quantity of whiskey. Old Jonathan is looking better already, and I confidently believe that in a fleeting moon or two he will walk proud and erect in the light of day and be one of us in heart and soul."

And so the Mosquitoville Club continued to

flourish. Each side struggled for supremacy, and never allowed a chance for victory to slip.

"If you will take lemonade instead of brandy," a prohibitionist would say to a drinking man, "I'll sell you that five-hundred dollar lot on Chestnut Street for four hundred and fifty."

And the drinking man would reply:

"If you will try a good stiff absinthe cocktail instead of that insufferable mead you have before you, I will drink five glasses of water and give you a receipt for the money you owe me for a cord of wood."

The grand result of this controversy was that at the end of six months all hands were converted. The prohibition army had made total abstainers of all the drinkers, and the drinking men had triumphed over the scruples of the teetotalers, until each of the latter had become a rational drinker. In other words, the two factions had simply changed places. And, strange as this may seem, it only resulted in another war that was even more warmly contested than the first. These contests were facetiously termed Mosquitoville's first and second Punic wars. When the drinking people had stopped drinking entirely, they began to feel the good effects of their move at once. They lost superfluous flesh, had better appetites, and felt so rejuvenated that they at once tried to convert the ex-prohibition party to its former principles out of pure gratitude. And the ex-prohibition people felt so happy and hilarious in their cups, that they generously did all in their power to bring the ex-drinkers around to their way of thinking, that they might enjoy the pleasures of

the flowing bowl together and be like a big family of brothers.

The club is still in a prosperous, healthy condition. But, despite the noblest and most self-sacrificing efforts of the others, the hard



drinkers, who were its charter members, can not be coaxed to take a drink by those who at the outset would sip nothing stronger than stickless drug-store soda-water. And the people who at the beginning did their best to make the total abstainers learn the subtle virtue of a cocktail are now struggling in vain to induce them to sign the pledge, and to wear the sky-blue ribbon of prohibition. Thus did the Brandyites and the Sodaites go to war, and both used their best art for victory, and both were victorious, having gained the triumph for which they set out. And they that were the Brandyites are now the Sodaites; and they that were the Sodaites are now the Brandyites; and all is as merry as a marriage-bell. Opinions are divided as to which party is the real



gainer. But while the new temperance men are said to take a drink at home upon the sly, it is also stated, and, perhaps, with equal truth, that the new drinking men are so far beyond reformation that they can not pass an urban sample room unless they are on an elevated train.

R. K. Munkittrick.

THE STORY OF WILLIAM.



*"I s'pose if you get the job, you'll expect to be made one of
the firm in a couple of weeks."*

THE STORY OF WILLIAM.



E is one of a group of boys who have assembled in the outer office of Messrs. Peters & Plunkett, wholesale grocers, in answer to an advertisement for an office-boy, "bright and of good habits." Eight boys are here to be chosen from, and seven of them are far more generously endowed than William with the requisite qualification of brilliancy, if not of rectitude. To be frank, William is stupid. He has a chunky little body, giving rich promise of mature amplification, red hair and cheeks, light-colored eyes, and lashes still lighter. He is the least promising of the applicants.

The latter part of the firm enters briskly to make the selection; he runs his eye over the group, allows it to rest upon a neat-looking youth, whose age he inquires.

"I s'pose if you get the job, you'll expect to be made one of the firm in a couple of weeks," says Mr. Plunkett, in that bantering and grimly

humorous way that he knows boys can not appreciate.

The lad is giving utterance to an awkward but sincere disclaimer, when a laugh shatters the silence in William's vicinity. It is not the abashed, uneasy, placative chuckle of awed juvenility, but a sustained, appreciative laugh of inimitable fluency, apparently expressing rare discernment and ready sympathy, the kind of laugh we so frequently miss after saying one of our best things. Its effect on Plunkett is electrical. As the last grateful cadence expires, he dismisses the seven expectants, and consummates a business alliance with William.

* * *

Plunkett had always been a facetious man, and, thenceforth, encouraged by William, he developed amazingly. The spontaneous expressions of approval which his sallies invariably elicited, not only explained what had at times perplexed Plunkett, namely, the precise nature of his superiority to the general run of humanity, but they exalted William in his estimation as a youth possessing mental fibre of unusual excellence.

Plunkett treated William with marked consideration in their business intercourse, and to his commercial brethren spoke of his office-boy as a prodigy. The environments of the grocery trade may not seem adapted to the development of a humorous vein; but Plunkett said a surprising number of funny things during the day, and William's tuneful and sympathetic laughter thereat was always satisfying. He never laughed at the wrong time; he knew what to expect when

Yarns from Puck.

Plunkett relaxed his facial rigidity, crossed his hands leisurely over his stomach, and looked down at him in an unctuous, fatherly sort of way, expressing perfect confidence in William's risible complaisance.

William's laugh never grated; true, you could analyze it as a contortion of the labial muscles, a rolling of the eyes, and a sonorous and rhythmically interrupted expulsion of air from the lungs; but that gives no idea of the subtle and elusive sympathy, the expression of keen enjoyment that enlivened its every intonation, and justified Plunkett's self-confessed belief in his own genius.

Being a stupid boy, William never made any personal attempts at humor, and thus retained his employer's respect. His remarks were few, and as brief as was consistent with a reasonably intelligent exposure of the exigencies of the moment. Consequently, Plunkett said: "There is a deep fellow for you."

* * *

Parkers was head book-keeper, and maintained inimical relations with William until the day he utilized him for the delivery of a message, adjuring him, under penalty of acquiring a successor, "don't let the grass grow under your heels." William's violent and uncontrollable mirth, provoked by this *bon mot*, brought out Plunkett from the inner office, who aggravated the paroxysm by a timely and characteristic jest; and William departed upon his errand in ebullient enjoyment of the privilege that marks man's superiority over the beasts of the field, or any beasts, for that

matter. Parkers and Plunkett were wonderfully drawn together by this episode; each wanted to grasp the other's hand, but neither braved the initiative. Parkers said: "Mighty bright boy, that;" and Plunkett said: "He is *that*; help him along, here in the office, whenever you can, Parkers."

* * *

Parkers's sudden discovery of himself as a humorist received daily confirmation from William. True, the remark above quoted was his only real pleasantry; but, then, he was busy with columns of figures all day, and had no leisure to study the columns of comic journals and try to be original; and, besides, he ascertained that frequent iteration did not impair the efficiency of his jest, for William's enjoyment of the same was always plenary. So William discharged many errands whose sole animus was Parkers's desire to revel in that insidious laugh. In return, he educated William, who, though moderate in his absorption of business principles, was patient, and possessed a retentive mind. William was never loquacious, never boisterous, and never called "Bill."

* * *

As the years passed on, William laughed his way to success. He labored at Parkers's ledgers and accounts with zealous rigor, until he could easily distinguish an invoice from a bill of lading. Plunkett had him invited to banquets, and soon Plunkett was known as a witty after-dinner speaker. In due time he married Plunkett's

❖ Yarns from Puck. ❖

daughter. To-day he is middle-aged, portly, and a member of the firm. He has a comfortable home, with the most elegant red-plush furniture in the parlor, the doors of which are draped with costly yellow portières, while the walls are decorated with some lovely landscapes received from the tea company in San Francisco; also with an oil painting for which William reverently confesses to have paid an enormous figure. He usually wears a Prince Albert coat and a white lawn tie, as these are his ideals of personal elegance; and, altogether, he has nothing to wish for.

His laugh has mellowed and matured somewhat, but is as readily excited as ever, because it is due to a nervous affection. When he laughs now, his eyes show a mystical light that seems to imply some secret enjoyment of your joke, some point that only he could discover, which convinces you that you are a sly one. In reality, William is wondering why he laughs.



* * *

The moral of this little tale is plain: Let us cultivate a strong and obvious disposition to spontaneous risibility. Observe my friend, as I favor him with one of my choice witticisms. If his

friendship is sincere, and he has no ulterior design upon me or my purse, he greets it with a look of jaded apathy, or, perchance, emits three dry, abbreviated chuckles which are merged into an elongated "Y-e-s" with falling inflection, that says: "Thought of the same thing, myself, thousand times, I assure you; but never thought it worth saying."

If, however, he has a point to make with me, he laughs a halting, constrained, chest laugh that hints at a secret and gnawing sorrow,—and if prone to dissimulation, he contorts his face fearfully, and shakes his sides with palpable inconvenience.

Let us discard this amateur and mechanical cachinnation that must irritate our friends, and cultivate that hearty, sympathetic, soulful laugh that brought William his reward, striving to mingle delicately with it a mute confession of our own inability to say anything half so witty as that which engages us.

H. L. Wilson.



HIS LUCKY NIGHT.



"A stylishly appointed coupé drew up in front of the portico."

HIS LUCKY NIGHT.



IT is not many months since "Jimmy" Hickey, as we all used to call him in his less palmy days, got his first real start in life.

Now, he can wear sealskin suspenders with diamond buckles, if he wants to; then, the white lawn ties which encircled his throat every evening were a serious drain on his income.

At that time Jimmy was a light-hearted and light-waisted young Society Man, and spent most of his leisure moments in fluttering around the outskirts of the Four Hundred, without, however, becoming seriously affected by the sycophantic taint of McAllisterism.

He was slender and graceful in figure. Thin enough to slip through the stage door, and broad enough to attract the attention of the chorus girls when he sat in the front row; tall enough, just about, to enable him to keep his chin above water; and short enough to be obliged to stand off his wash-lady, occasionally.

❖ Hanks; ❖

For his mode of living was a little precarious, as he depended largely on the "buns" he was able to pick up in "The Street."

But Jimmy's lucky star was burning with ten-million-candle power on the evening he went to the Horse Show.

He had put in his time with his back to the arena, looking at the girls in the boxes. At half past eleven, Fashion began to gather up her skirts and shake the tan bark from off her feet, and Jimmy began to lose his interest in the show.

So he followed the crowd out into the lobby, and laying his check on the shelf in front of the coat-room window, called out to the attendant in a jocular tone of voice: "A fur-lined overcoat, please."

"Fur-lined overcoat, sir? Here you are, sir: Number 99," answered the man, briskly, as he handed Jimmy a royally splendid garment.

Now, Jimmy's check was number 66, and he saw in a moment that the man had read the figures upside-down.

His first impulse was to rectify the mistake, and claim his more modest box-coat; but on second thoughts he decided to take advantage of the error, and astonish the boys at the club with his new magnificence.

The return of the borrowed coat in the morning would straighten matters out. He was an expert on loans of every description, and considered this a "call loan;" at least he knew he had the call.

Then he sauntered leisurely through the vestibule, and allowed the apparel to proclaim the man, for, as he reached the sidewalk a uniformed

❖ Yarns from Puck. ❖

functionary touched his cap respectfully and inquired the number of his carriage.

"Call 411;" said Jimmy, and chuckled as he thought of the way the policeman and chorus of hangers on would make the night hideous in the effort to discover his mythical conveyance.

But the shouts had scarcely reached the ears of Diana On The Tower before a stylishly appointed coupé drew up in front of the portico, and there was nothing for Jimmy to do but press a coin (which he had found in the pocket of the ulster) into the hand of the nearest loafer and step inside the carriage. The coachman who had been trying to control his excited team let them have their heads as soon as he heard the door slam, and Jimmy found that he had effected a second loan.

"Well, I hope this carriage does n't belong to the same man as the fur-lined overcoat; the poor beggar will catch his death of cold walking home in a dress-suit," he commented thoughtfully.

As he spoke, he pushed his hand down into the pocket of the ulster. It touched a cold, hard substance, which his instinct told him was a silver pocket-flask filled with brandy. After he had proved the correctness of this impression, he also discovered a pair of gloves, two cigars and some small change. He lit one of the cigars and found it equal to those Jack Lever sometimes gave him.

He thought with a little amusement of the simple-mindedness of a man who could trust such things as brandy, cigars and money within the reach of the coat-room people. "Confound him! He had no business to throw temptation into the way of men of that class of life. But this will

teach him a lesson. By Jove, he 'll be more careful, next time!"

But Jimmy's moral reflections were broken in upon by the carriage, which had turned the corner, coming to a stop before a four-story house in the centre of the block.

"I 'll get out and run up the steps until the coachman drives away," thought he; "and then I 'll slide around to the club." But this stratagem was not fated to be a success, for as he entered the vestibule he heard footsteps behind him, and on turning around confronted an old gentleman, who exclaimed: "Why, Frank, my boy, you 're home early to night; oh, I beg your pardon, sir; I thought it was my son!"

"I wanted to see Mr. John Newberry," said Jimmy, readily; "but you are not he."

"No; Newberry lives on 53d Street; this is 52d."

"Then my coachman must have made a mistake in the street; and now he has driven off, as I told him he need n't wait for me. Is Mr. Newberry's number the same as this?"

"H'm! I don't recollect. Just step inside and I will look it up in my address book," said the old gentleman, holding the door open.

"It seems a strange hour to call on a man," remarked Jimmy, as he followed his host through the hall into the library and selected an easy-chair; "but I have an appointment to meet Mr. Newberry in regard to some Granger Car Trust Stock. He leaves for the West early in the morning, and as he said he was going to a big banquet this evening, he said he would see me any time after twelve o'clock."

Granger Car Trust had been in Jimmy's head all day, and that was the reason he came to speak of it. It was a stock which had never paid any dividends, and had consequently sold at a low figure for a number of years. Now, Jimmy had discovered that the President of one of the big Western roads, with which the Car Trust had a very disadvantageous contract, had secretly acquired a controlling interest in its stock. And the inference which Jimmy's Wall Street training enabled him to draw from this move was that before many moons the boot would be on the other leg, and the Car Trust would get the cream of the road's earnings, and the stock-holders of the Great Divide & South Western would get —

"Naught but wishes, hopes and promises;
The currency of idiots."

He had been skirmishing around all day, trying to get hold of some Car Trust stock before his tip became public property; and as he had spoken at random, for the purpose of saying something and to kill time, his pet hobby had popped out of his mouth before he knew it.

At the mention of this security, his host looked up from the book where he was engaged in searching for Mr. Newberry's address.

"I have a block of that stock myself. What do you want to do in it?" he asked.

"Sell it!" answered Jimmy, promptly, scenting trade and approaching it backward in the regulation Stock Exchange way.

"I'd like to sell mine, too, if I could get anything for it," sighed the old gentleman.

"I think Mr. Newberry wants more than I have; perhaps I can sell yours also."

"I hold a thousand shares, and I'll give you a liberal commission if you can get twenty for them."

"I never work for commissions — and I'm offering mine for less money," said Jimmy, grandly; "but I'll buy your stock at fifteen, and take my chances of squeezing a couple of points out of it."

"I guess I'll let you have it," said the old gentleman; "that's the best bid I've ever had on it."

"Got it here?" asked Jimmy; "I want to turn it over to Newberry to-night."

"Yes; it's here in my safe."

"All right; I'll give you a check on my private account in the Knickerbocker Trust Co.," said Jimmy, as he pulled out a little pocket check-book which represented an actual balance of \$79.48.



In his eagerness to get rid of a dubious stock at a fair profit, the old gentleman never thought of requesting a certified check. No one

could be expected to get his check certified at midnight; and, besides, a man who owned such a swell turnout, and wore such expensive clothes, and spoke so coolly of drawing on his private bank account for \$15,000, was good enough for *him*.

And the fact that Jimmy knew Mr. Newberry, stamped him as a man of means.

Mr. Newberry's friends were of the pluto-cratic class. An acquaintance with him was better than Bradstreet's highest rating.

So Jimmy took the coveted stock, and



made a hurried exit on the plea that he was keeping the billionaire waiting.

As Jimmy lay awake that night, thinking of some means of making his check good, a new difficulty confronted him.

If "Frank" and his father should meet, they might compare notes about the loss of the

carriage and the sale of the stock, with disastrous results.

But Frank had attached no importance to his failure to find his carriage. To him it was only one of the queer events of a very hazy evening. He did not return home until five o'clock, and when he arose at noon, the next day, his father had long since left the house.

The next morning, vague rumors about Granger Car Trust began to circulate through the Street.

It was whispered that there was "a hen on," and under the eager bidding of a horde of buyers the price jumped up to forty.



So Jimmy had no trouble in making a loan to take care of his check.

This was Jimmy's first ten-strike.

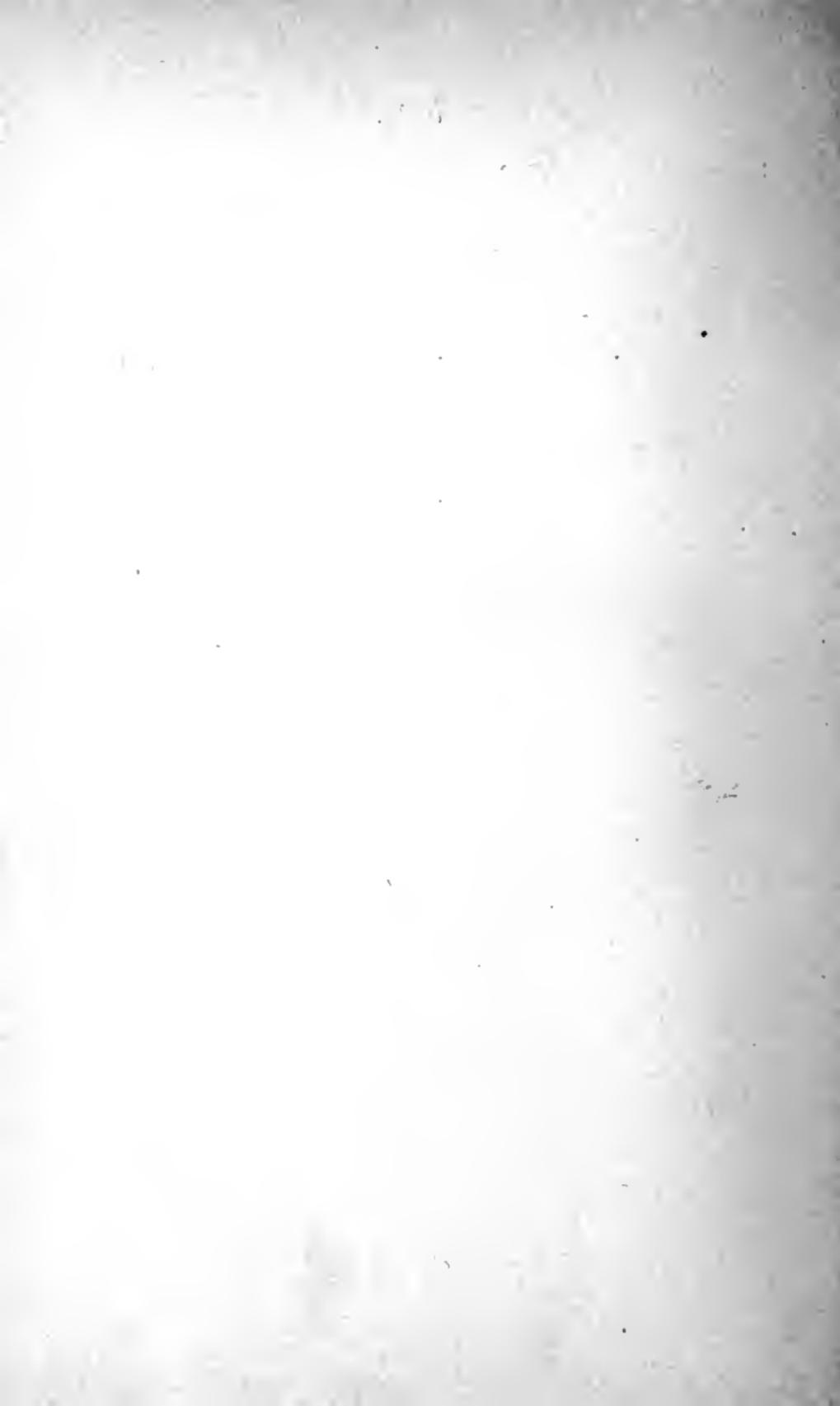
He eventually disposed of his stock at one

❖ Yarns from Puck. ❖

hundred and five, and since then his judicious speculations have increased his pile, until he has become quite a capitalist.

Now, I don't envy Jimmy his good luck, but when I hear him holding himself up as a brilliant example of the value of honest industry and plodding economy, I am inclined to call him down and to remind him that he is conducting his part of the conversation through his new and always glossy silk hat.

Harry Romaine.



FOILED AGAIN;
OR,
THE BANKER'S VENGEANCE.



*"I blush to confess it," answered
the banker, bursting into tears."*

FOILED AGAIN;

OR,

THE BANKER'S VENGEANCE.



"Sir, may I trespass upon your time for a few moments?" said the smug gentleman in a white necktie to the whole-souled Bank President, Mr. Thyme Locke.

"What is it?" asked Mr. Locke, pausing for a moment in his occupation of trying to see how the cashier had done it. "Are you from Montreal?"

"No," answered the other. "I am here on a charitable errand."

"Go ahead," said Mr. Locke, lighting a cigar.

"I represent, this morning, the United Employment Furnishing Aid and Relief Society."

"Good name!" said Mr. Locke, dryly; "what is it for?"

"To provide fitting homes and suitable labor for deserving and indigent females of temperate habits."



"Did Mr. Evarts draw up your constitution and by-laws?" asked the Banker, meditatively.

"No."

"Well, go ahead. What of it?"

"We should be glad to offer you the opportunity of making such fitting contribution to our society as would seem to you—"

"Ah! yes; I see. But what do you spend it for?"

"For the furtherance of the object of—"

"Yes, yes. Well, I believe in doing things in the easiest way. I don't care for middlemen where I can get rid of them. I'll tell you what I'll do. You send around one of the—the objects,—the raw material, so to speak,—and I'll make a contribution in kind. Understand?"

❖ Yarns from Puck. ❖

“Not precisely.”

“Send one of the indigent ‘females’ — a woman, if you can — and I’ll see that she gets a place. Do you get me?”

“Ah! yes.”

“Good-morning.”

“Good-morning.”

“Send at two-thirty, sharp.”

“Yes, Mr. Locke.”

Just as the hands of the bank clock reached fifteen minutes past three, a timid knock was



heard upon the ground glass behind which the banker was still engaged upon the pretty puzzle which the Canadian had left him.

Mr. Locke had just discovered another miss-

ing five thousand dollars, and so he looked up sharply, and said abruptly:

“Come!”

The door opened creepingly and a figure in black inserted itself.

“Who are you, Madam?” asked the President.

“I’m the lady from the United Emp—”

“Ah! Sit down.”

“Thank you, sir.”

“Well, what can you do?”

“All kinds of work, sir.”

“Widow?”

“Yes, sir.”

“What did he die of?”

“The doctor said he could n’t digest his food.”

“Indeed! Why did n’t you come at two-thirty?”

“I—was a little late, sir. I met a friend—”

“Well, no matter. My wife needs a woman to do general work about the house, and I thought perhaps you might do.”

“Thank you, sir. You’re very kind, I’m sure.”

“Can you cook?”

“Plain cooking—yes, sir.”

“Wash?”

“Do you expect the cook to do the washing?”

“Well, we have at times.”

“Do you have stationary tubs?”

“I think so—yes. Why, of course! Oh, yes! We must, I think.”

“Would you expect to put out the collars and cuffs?”

Yarns from Puck.

“I suppose we could.”

“Do you have a man to attend to the furnace?”

“Ah,—yes! Oh, yes!”

“Would I have my Sundays and Thursdays?”

“Quite so. Why, to be sure! Oh, yes!”

“Do you have early dinner, Sunday?”

“Never have;—but we could—easily.”

“Other girls kept?”

“A whole regiment of ‘em.”

“Do you sift your ashes?”

“No; I don’t. Must we?”

“Can I wear bangs?”

“We adore them! Pray, do.”

“Do you expect us to wear caps?”

“Oh, no! Not unless you prefer.”

“Well, it seems like a nice place.”

“Delighted that you’re pleased!”

“How many in the family?”

“Oh—several!”

“Any children?”

“A few, I think.”

“And where is it?”

“About a half-mile out of town.”

“*In the country!!!*”

“I blush to confess it,” answered the banker, bursting into tears.

The door closed with a bang, and a moment later the unhappy man sank fainting to the floor.

When he had finished the examination of the cashier’s accounts, Mr. Locke called for the stock-book, and with nervous eagerness conveyed a large number of shares to the United Employment Furnishing Aid and Relief Society. The

• hanks; •

certificates were transferred and accepted the same day.

The exuberant gratitude of the society was, however, somewhat chilled upon the following day, when the bank went down with a sickening crash.

At last accounts the society was meeting assessments upon the stock.

T. J.



VAN GIBBER AND THE
STREET-CAR.



*"With a steel-like grip he caught
the loafer and flung him to the fur-
ther end of the car."*

VAN GIBBER AND THE STREET-CAR.



AN GIBBER was terribly bored. He had been kept in town two weeks after the season had opened and everybody worth knowing had left for the seaside or Europe, by a plaguy law suit involving a paltry \$250,000.

Time and again he had told his lawyer not to bother with any financial difference of less than \$500,000; but the attorney, who was one of the old school (he was Van Schaick, and a Van Twiller on his mother's side), and had been Van Gibber's father's and Van Gibber's grandfather's attorney and agent, had flown into a professional fury at the young man, and talked to him like a Dutch uncle (literally) about his loose business habits, till Van, rather than aggravate the testy old fellow, agreed to remain in town after June 8th, for the first time in his life.

He was terribly ashamed of the plebeian act, however, so much so that his man, noticing his mortification and divining its cause, assured him on the honor of an English man that he would never divulge his disgrace; and Van Gibber was so overcome by this evidence of his servitor's devotion that for a moment or two he

almost thought of thanking him. But he refrained, and simply turned a cold Knickerbocker look upon him that greatly increased the man's respect for his master.

Van Gibber's perplexity was to know how to live and not be seen by any who might report his presence in town at such an unfashionable date. He could not ride or drive, for some of the old men, who were reckless and still staid in town till June 20, to the great scandal of the set, would be sure to see him and report the fact. He might walk. He had once walked six blocks down Broadway, but that was when he was in training, during his college days. The effort would be too much for him now. It was out of the question. So was the elevated road. A friend of his at the Club had told him of a wild trip he had taken on the "L" road from Wall Street to Twenty-third Street, and how his head had ached for a week afterward.

Suddenly an idea struck him — *the street-cars*. There were horse-cars running on certain streets in the city. He had never seen them, but he knew they existed, because his father had left him a block of stock in the line, and he dimly recollects his lawyer telling him a short time before, that he had been elected president, or manager, or something, of the company. He rang for his man and asked where the nearest



horse-car line was. The man nearly choked with astonishment, but he answered. Van Gibber shuddered at the name of the street. He had never heard of it before. It must be very unfashionable. He half repented of his determination; but he finally made a mental note of the place. He declined the man's offer to call a horse, and to that person's great amazement actually walked out of sight around the corner. Van Gibber hired the first small boy he saw, to conduct him to his destination. It was much nearer his house than he imagined, and the boy was dumbfounded when Van Gibber handed him a dollar.

He had not long to wait, for presently, with a prodigious noise and jangling of bells, a car hove in sight. Van Gibber raised his umbrella; but the car rushed furiously past him, and the driver angrily motioned him to follow. He perceived the car stop at the farther crossing.

"Back up, my good fellow," said Van Gibber.
"How the deuce do you expect me—"

"Back nothing, you Macy dude! If you want this car, come a-hoppin'," was the reply. To say Van Gibber was astonished is putting it mildly. His first impulse was to thrash the impudent fellow; but he saw that this would do no good, so he picked his way across the street and stepped upon the platform. The car started with a savage jerk, and the conductor muttered something about "monkeys in men's clothes," which Van Gibber did not catch the drift of. Several men paid their fare, and Van Gibber was very much interested in the manner in which the conductor registered them. That person tapped Van Gibber on the arm and the latter saw that his

fare was required. He handed the conductor a dollar and turned away. The conductor began counting out a vast quantity of small coins of a denomination unknown to Van Gibber. A handful of these were put into his palm. He looked at them blankly and then at the conductor.

"That's your change!" the latter said contemptuously.

"Change? Oh, keep it for your trouble!" said Van Gibber, passing back the nickels and



dusting his hands with his handkerchief. He entered the car and took the only seat left. This was not done without an inward shudder, for in all his life Van Gibber had never been in such miscellaneous company before. There was a negro in one corner and a Chinaman on the front-plat-

Yarns from Puck.

form, and right across from him sat a very large woman holding on her lap a basket from under the lid of which stuck the head of a live hen. There was not another gentleman in the car—not a man who wore a gardenia in his button-hole, or whose collar and cuffs were indigenous to his shirt.

They were coarse and common-looking, and Van Gibber wondered if they really had names, or if they were just numbered. The car stopped, and two women entered. Van Gibber was on his feet in an instant, and, hat in hand, showed the first comer to his seat. She was a portly woman with a large, brown-paper parcel. The other, a distinguished-looking young person attired in a black broadcloth dress, took a strap which hung from a bar running lengthwise of the car, and stood up!

Van Gibber looked about him in consternation. No one seemed to think the lady was doing anything but what was proper. Among others in the car were several rough fellows, who looked as if they might work for a living. They continued to read papers, or look out of the window. Van Gibber touched one on the shoulder. He looked up.

“Beg pardon,” said Van Gibber; “this lady is standing.”

“What of it?” asked the man brutally.

“But you don’t seem to understand. She wants a seat.”

“Well, where is it? I don’t see it,” said the fellow with a laugh.

“Well, I do,” said Van Gibber, as with a steel-like grip he caught the loafer and flung him

to the further end of the car. "Madam, allow me," and he bowed gracefully to the standing woman. The man picked himself up, and with a howl of rage flew at Van Gibber. Two companions simultaneously attacked him from behind. Van Gibber's terrible left swung out and caught the assailant with an upper cut which sent him to the ground again, while at the same time his right came around with an awful sweep on the nose of No. 2. He clinched with No. 3, and, getting a half-Nelson, flung him with two broken ribs upon the floor. By this time the car had stopped, and the passengers fled to the street. The woman, the seating of whom had caused trouble, arose and left also. Outside she began to tap lightly on the pavement with her parasol. Van Gibber followed her to the curb. He had not even ruffled his necktie.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "but that call you are giving is for the Board of Public Works — not the Police. Allow me to escort you to your home before they arrive;" and, in spite of her protests, he handed her into a cab. She gave him an address.

"Why, that is Mrs. Van Holler's, is it not?" he said.

"Y-e-s" — hesitatingly.

"That is strange — I beg your pardon, but my name is Van Gibber, and Mrs. Van Holler is my dearest friend. You are stopping with her, I presume."

"Yes; for the present."

"But she is out of town — Newport, I think."

"Yes."

❖ Yarns from Puck. ❖

Her shyness was very charming to Van Gibber. He thought her exquisite. How strange he had never met her before! Her presence on the street-car was probably accountable to the same reason as his own. They talked of various things, and she seemed to know many of his friends. Really, he must follow this up. At the house he bade her good-by, and ventured to press her hand slightly as he handed her from the cab, and hazarded the hope that he might see her again at Newport or Lenox.

Two weeks later he ran across Mrs. Van Holler in the Casino at Newport. She took him up to lunch at her cottage, and he saw his cab companion in a side room sewing upon one of Mrs. Van Holler's gowns.

Van Gibber went back to New York. He told his man to go and see his lawyer about passing a law to compel common people to ride in street-cars only at certain hours, or else to abolish street-cars altogether.

PUCK'S Patent Davis.





SUING FOR DAMAGES.



“ ‘I’m a cook, sir, which same is a necessary avil.’ ”

SUING FOR DAMAGES.



MRS. MULRANEY passed across her heated brow a new handkerchief trimmed with imitation lace; she adjusted her green ribbons, and gave the front of her dress an approving pat; she exchanged smiles with another approving Pat who was seated far back among the spectators, for on the successful termination of this suit the speedy happiness of the pair depended. She felt that she had passed handsomely through the ordeal, and was by no means prepared for her counsel's concluding words. "You may have the witness," he had remarked with a friendly nod toward the attorney for the defense. "Can he, indade? an' much good may she do him," retorted Mrs. Mulraney, wheeling around to confront the enemy. Pat, in the background, hitched uneasily on his seat. It was a settled thing that he should have the witness when these lawyers were done with her.

"You are a widow, I believe, Mrs. Mulraney?" began the opposing counsel in a pleasant, conversational tone.

"That's what I am, an' I can call witnesses to prove it," answered the plaintiff; and Pat half

rose from his chair. This was a point to which he could speak from personal knowledge.

"Now, how do you know that it was the hose cart attached to Engine 31 that ran over you at Eighth Avenue and 23d Street on the day in question?" proceeded the cross-examiner.

"Beca'se I heerd the b'ys yellin' it out: 'There she goes with her hose strealin'!' And at first I thought it was me own stockin's they meant, for who's to know how the likes would be, an' a body knocked down wid horse power? But sure it was the engine's stockin' — hose, I mane — they had riference to."

"Exactly; so it is from hearsay you accuse the engine — "

"Sorra taste; it was from feelin', wid me back bruk, an' all me vallybles ground into me!"

"Please allow me to finish my question. Where were you going at the time the accident occurred?"

"I was goin' home, as a dacent woman should, close on to tin at night, which is always me hour on me Sunday out."

"So you had been spending the day out! Now, where were you coming from?"

"I object," interjected plaintiff's counsel, springing to his feet.

"An' so do I!" echoed Mrs. Mulraney. "I



Yarns from Puck.

object strong! What call has he axin' the like o' them questions, anyhow?"

A short tilt between the lawyers brought out that counsel for the defense was seeking to impugn plaintiff's sobriety. The question was allowed.

"Well, then, I was spendin' the evenin' wid Pat — was n't I, Pat? — and did ere a sup pass me two lips, barrin' that little tint o' beer what ye 'd be to have me to drink? an' now may be it 's goin' to cost me thousands o' dollars! Spake up, Pat, yer sowl ye, an tell His Honor I niver looked the side of as much liquor as 'u'd drown'd a flea that blissid day."

Thus adjured, Pat rose; but his answer was not admitted by the court. The cross-examination continued, and by this time Mrs. Mulraney was in a highly excited and nervous state.

"I have been given to understand," pursued the lawyer, after a glance at his notes, "that with regard to the damages sought in this action, the plaintiff has already executed a conveyance —"

"Is it me?" shrieked Mrs. Mulraney, horrified at this monstrous allegation; "is it me exec-
uted a conveyance, when it 's only by special
mercy the conveyance did n't execute me? I
tell you I 'd come uptown in a car wid Pat,
there beyant, and I towld him good-by at the
corner, an' started to cross the strate, an' —"

"In what did you cross the street?" interposed the examining lawyer.

"In the mud! More betoken, I wish ye cud 'ha' seen me Sunday gown, afther me bein'
rowled in it, an' only for the dacency of the
policeman what 's placed there to protect the
furious drivers, sorra cross iver I 'd ha' crossed."

• hanks; •

"I mean, did you ride or walk?" interrupted the lawyer, impatiently.

"Faix, I done nayther, sir. I run, an kep' a-runnin' till I was knocked down."

"This was at the crossing of Eighth Avenue and Twenty-third Street?"

"That 's where it was, an' aisier an' safer I 'd find it to cross the siven oceans in a horse-car that same night!"

"From what direction did the hose cart approach?"

"There were maychines comin' from all sides, an' I think it come out o' the skies; it struck me that suddint."

"There are no engine houses in that direction," remarked the lawyer with a smile.

"I don't doubt but what the fires do be mostly the other way," assented the witness.

"What is your profession, or calling?"

"I 'm a cook, sir, which same is a necessary avil, as ye 'll own, for ye look like a gintleman who 'd enjoy a good dinner yersilf, an' I don't say but the same 'u'd do ye good; an' I 've ivery second Sunday to meself, as a lady has a right, to walk out wid or widout company—that same 's Pat, beyant—an' to go abroad an' be run over at will by vehicles an' convaynincies which go harmless and often unprotected through the strates of this city, which have no other place to walk an' have ivery right to, widout bein' ground down an' bruk up so as I can't make me livin'—a thing I 've always done honest, an' niver failed till now to have a few dollars to send home to me ould father round about Christmas time."

"A very proper feeling, Mrs. Mulraney; but,

surely, this trifling accident has not debarred you from the exercise of your honorable profession."

"Thriflin'? wid me lift rib impressin' on me heart, as the doctor towld me! 'Ma'am,' says he, 'it's only astonishin' that you're alive this minnit;' an' not a day but it takes the biggest part of a bottle o' brandy to kape up me spirits at all, to say nothin' of a decent b'y that was axin' to marry me; an' how can I ax him to take an ould sack o' crushed bones, whin it was a purfessed cook he was coortin'?"



"I do not think your accident will cost you your sweetheart," remarked the lawyer, with a quizzical glance at Pat, who had remained a deeply interested spectator, "nor do you seem to have suffered in other ways. I can not learn that either your salary or your perquisites are in abeyance—"

"They're in the bank, led up for a green ould age! Where else'd they be?"

"That's all, Madam; you can stand down."

"Thank Yer Honor; I'd liefer sit down, av ye plaze."

"Just as you like, Ma'am."

"An' me damages — don't I git them?"

"That is a question for the jury to decide."

"Ah! an' av that 's the way of it, I 've no call to be afeard. It 's not in this town that ye 'll find any twelve men who won't know the dangers an' perils av the strates; and it 's not in unther the skin av any o' them fine looking, cliver, good gintlemen to take the bread out o' a poor widdy's mouth, whin they can make her an' a dasent b'y happy, widout its costin' wan o' them a cint! Yer sarvent, good gentlemen, an' may all sorts o' good luck attend ye, an'—"

"Come, come, my good woman!"

"Yis, Yer Honor; an' may the wish o' yer hearts niver fail ye, an' may ye niver die till ye see great-grand-children 'round ye, as handsome as yersilves! Yis, Your Honor, I hear ye!" and Mrs. Mulraney joined her counsel.

Owing to the justice of her cause, to her judicious application of blarney to the jurors, or to her masterly resistance during a severe cross-examination, Mrs. Mulraney collected two thousand dollars from the city, abandoned her professional career, and is now living in affluence with "the b'y of her ch'ice."

G. H. Jessop.



WHY THE
REVEREND EDWARD ATKINS
CHANGED HIS PARISH.



"Mr. Higginbotham rammed down the Martyrs, a few tracts, and a pair of embroidered slippers."

WHY THE REVEREND EDWARD ATKINS CHANGED HIS PARISH.



HE Reverend Edward Atkins was a good young clergyman who presided over a country parish in Vermont. His salary was not large, and he sometimes wondered if it was not possible to add to it in some legitimate way. Among his parishioners was a Mrs. Sober, a lady who wrote books and short stories that contained an underlying substratum of moral purpose. The interest often suffered thereby, and the books did not find a ready sale, a sad and undeniable fact, which Mrs. Sober attributed to the equally sad and undeniable fact that there are so many wicked people in the world nowadays; nevertheless, the little stories which she occasionally wrote for the religious papers brought her small sums of money, and, among her fellow-townspeople, unlimited glory.

The Reverend Edward Atkins was not ambitious in a worldly way, nor was he a grasping man, yet he cherished a mild desire for the five-

dollar checks and the goodly amount of honor which he could obtain by having a story in some religious weekly. He bought himself a small compendium of information for authors, and therein finding several recipes for concocting stories, set himself about what promised to be an easy task.

"Take so much good young man," said he to himself, "simmer him gently in some stock temptation, pour grated moral reflections over him, and there you are."

However, the paper which he had selected to write his stories for, only published stories suitable for children; so he concluded to try another recipe. He looked over the table of contents of several children's magazines, and was struck by the large number of stories that bore the title, "Chased by Wolves," or, at all events, slight variations of that title.

"Here is a popular subject," said Atkins to himself; "and about all I have to do is to have a man, some wolves, have the wolves chase the man, and have the man get away. Have the man skate away, run away, swim away, climb a tree, or have him tip six cords of wood off a bob-sled, and the horses, lightened of the load, carry him away at a furious speed. It is very simple. The man and the wolves are the main thing, the rest will come of itself." And he laid on his desk a plain white writing tablet, such as the author's compendium had advised him to get, and gently chewed the end of a medium soft pencil, another suggestion of the compendium.

The story must convey a moral, and here was the only difficulty, for it was not altogether

❖ Yarns from Puck. ❖

an easy task to make a wolf story convey a moral. He might have two bad little boys, who had been told by their mother to stay home evenings, go off skating and be chased by the wolves; but the complete production of a moral effect would demand that the wolves eat up the bad little boys, and this would be altogether too disagreeable an ending for the story and the bad little boys. He looked in the compendium, and, under the heading "Plot," read, "Suggestions for plots may often be found in the daily newspapers." He did not take a daily, but was a subscriber to the local weekly, and he picked up the latest issue and glanced over the village items:

"Adam Pease's cow was sick the fore part of the week."

"Stephen Hancock went to Boston the fore part of the week."

"Mrs. Hiram Hutchinson has been enjoying poor health of late."

He glanced down the column, over the items concerning bad roads; deaths and marriages; surprise parties and quilting bees; the squashes, pumpkins, onions, and large eggs that had been presented to the editor, and at the end found an item that attracted his attention:

"Royal P. Harvey called at our office last week, and showed us something which he prizes highly. It was a Testament with a round hole going through the cover and part way through the book. Opening it, he showed us what made the hole, a bullet embedded in the leaves. He carried this Testament in his breast pocket during the war, and at the Battle of the Wilderness it saved his life, for the bullet, which otherwise would have penetrated his breast, was effectually stopped by the Testament."

Ah! here was a suggestion. He would have the hero of his story carry a Testament. When

the wolf leaped at the hero's breast pocket to bite at his heart, after the manner of all savage animals, the creature's teeth would be caught in the Testament and the hero would be saved.

But *did* savage animals make for the heart of their victims? Was it not the throat that they sought? He could not have his hero wear the Testament about the neck. Moreover, would so small a book as a Testament be a sufficient protection? for if, perchance, the wolf miss the breast pocket in his leap, he might do the hero much harm in some other place. No; an atlas of goodly dimensions would be the only sure protection, and this would necessitate that the hero be a depraved book agent, with the sample of his wares concealed beneath his coat to beguile the wary, and such a person would never do for the hero of a moral tale.

At last, the plot and the attendant incidents formulated themselves in his mind. The hero was a young clergyman living upon the banks of a large lake in the Maine woods, who, presiding over several congregations, in Winter-time was accustomed to skate to and from his various preaching places. As the exigencies of the chosen plot demanded that there be but one pursuing wolf, the hero was described as a man small in stature, and mild, but great in virtue and valiant in good deeds, and the wolf was described as an exceedingly large and ferocious beast of a terrifying aspect. The first two-thirds of the story was taken up by a description of the virtues of the hero and a short account of his pedigree, thus furnishing the moral pabulum necessary for a story of this kind, and preparing



the reader's mind for the great enjoyment of hearing how this good young man escaped from the wolf. We will not bother ourselves with the first part of the tale, but will come to the wolf episode at once. We will take up the hero as he is slowly skating homeward over the surface of Lake Mahopog, one Sunday afternoon, after having held services at Mahopog Village :

"The ice was as smooth as glass. Overhead, a few fleecy clouds drifted in the deep blue sky. As Mr. Higginbotham sped over the ice toward home, he revolved in his mind many plans for raising money to build the church which the now thriving congregation at Mahopog Village needed so badly. In his hands he held a bulky volume of Baxter's *Saints' Rest*, which he perused as he sped over the smooth expanse. It was his custom to ever carry some good books and read them as he wended his way. But his mind was now so full of thoughts of the Mahopog church, and, as the slowly declining orb of day gradually sinking toward the western horizon warned him that the day was dying, and he had many miles yet to go, he put the *Saints' Rest* in the left side lower pocket of his overcoat, and skated more vigorously.

"A low, ominous howl caught his attention. He turned his head, and saw speeding toward him, over the ice, at a distance of a quarter of a mile, an enormous wolf. Four miles lay between him and the place where the lake flowed into the Mahopog River. On the banks of the river was a logging camp, and his cries would call the loggers to his rescue if the beast should come upon him before he could have time to unstrap his skates and dash for the protection of a logger's cabin. Could he outstrip the wolf? Merrily rang his skates. He looked back. The wolf was surely gaining. He could see the gaping red mouth, and the flashing eyes of the ferocious animal, and every little while a terrible howl smote upon his ear. Fear lent wings to his feet; but on came the wolf, faster than ever. He had no weapon about him to defend himself; but if his strength would only hold out longer than the wolf's, he would escape yet.

"The bottom of his overcoat, rendered heavy on the left side by the bulky volume of the Saints' Rest low down in the side pocket, flapped against his legs and impeded his movements. He started to throw the book away; but paused, and thought it would be wrong to throw so good a book away. If he could get to the logging camp and get into a cabin before the wolf overtook him, he would escape yet.

"On came the wolf, his mouth gaping open as he gave vent to frequent howls. The Saints' Rest flapped against Mr. Higginbotham's legs more than ever. He said to himself that if he threw it away, perhaps the wolf would stop to see what the thing fluttering on the ice was, and he

❖ Yarns from Puck. ❖

would gain time; but he thought of the wicked Russian woman who threw her children out to the pursuing wolves in order to save her own life, and concluded that it would be wrong to sacrifice such a good book as the Saints' Rest. After all, if the wolf should abandon the chase, he would escape yet.

"On came the wolf, nearer, nearer, nearer, and a stiff breeze sprung up directly in Mr. Higginbotham's face. The Saints' Rest side of his overcoat flaps against his legs worse than ever; but he puts aside temptation and struggles against the wind. The wolf gains upon him. He fears he will be lost; but he sees far ahead of him a long, slender, black object lying on the ice; perhaps it is a gun or something of the sort. If he can only get there before the wolf overtakes him, he may be able to defend himself and escape yet. Nearer comes the wolf. Mr. Higginbotham struggles against the wind and gets nearer to the long, black thing. On, on, pant, pant, goes the wolf; flap, flap, goes the left side of Mr. Higginbotham's overcoat with the Saints' Rest in the pocket. He is almost upon the black thing when the wolf makes a mighty leap, seizes the left side of the overcoat in his powerful jaws; Mr. Higginbotham staggers; there is a tearing sound, the overcoat parts, leaving the lower left side in the wolf's mouth; Mr. Higginbotham, released by the sudden tear, slides forward, falls upon the black object, leaps to his feet with it in his hands. It is a stout, oaken sled stake; he turns to face his enemy with this trusty weapon.

Behold! the wolf is rolling on his back, pawing convulsively at his mouth. He had bitten

the overcoat just over the pocket where the Saints' Rest was, and his teeth had stuck in the book and he could n't get them out. With one blow of the sled stake, Mr. Higginbotham killed the wolf, and then he felt thankful that he had not yielded to temptation and thrown away the Saints' Rest, for it had saved his life. More, he received ten dollars bounty for killing the wolf, and eleven dollars for its skin."

Such was the dramatic wind-up of the otherwise prosaic and meandering tale written by the Reverend Edward Atkins. In the first two-thirds of the story, he had described a model young man; in the last third he had pictured the young man beset at once by temptation and a large wolf, triumphantly overcoming the former and thereby escaping the latter, and winning twenty-one dollars. The most critical could find no fault with the story and it was at once sent to a large religious weekly.

It happened that in the building containing the editorial rooms of the religious weekly, there were also the editorial rooms of a weekly of a far different sort, a weekly whose columns were intended to excite merriment in its readers, and which, beyond printing colored political cartoons, did not pretend to influence the populace, save to laughter. By some mistake of the postman, Mr. Atkins's manuscript was dumped upon the table of the humorous editor and lay there in the secular companionship of jokes, funny stories, and light lyrics. The humorous editor opened the envelope without noticing the address, but he had not read far before he decided that the story must have



been intended for the paper across the passage, and reading the address, saw he was right. However, his paper frankly told everyone that accepted manuscripts must be subject to editorial revision, and he believed that this manuscript, with a little editorial revision, could be made suitable for his paper. He left the first part of the story just as Mr. Atkins had written it, but the part relating the adventure with the wolf, he changed a little.

A few days later, Mr. Atkins was amazed and pleased by receiving a check for twenty-five dollars from a paper whose name he had never heard. He did not understand why the check should come from this paper instead of the religious weekly, but as the compensation was five times as large as he had hoped to receive, he had no objections to make. Two months passed and he received a copy of the paper. It contained his story. As he looked through the pages to see in what company the story had fallen, he wondered that this paper should have abandoned its

levity enough to publish his story. Full of the thoughts of other stories that were to bring him twenty-five dollar checks, he read his story in calm content. He read of the good young hero and his pedigree, and, I regret to say, skipped a little to come to the less elevating, but more interesting account of the wolf adventure. And here, alas, he came upon evidences of editorial revision:

"In his hands he held a bulky volume of Baxter's Saints' Rest, which he perused as he sped over the smooth expanse. It was his custom to ever carry some good books and read them as he wended his way, and he had in the lower right pocket of his overcoat, a copy of Jeremy Taylor's Holy Living, and in the rear pocket, the companion volume on Holy Dying; in his breast pocket, a small copy of Fox's Martyrs without illustrations, and his inner overcoat pockets, and his coat and vest pockets, were wadded full of tracts, Sunday School leaflets, Quarterly Reports of the Methodist Missionary Society, and other documents of the sort."

Mr. Atkins gasped. The story would go on as he had written it for a few lines at a time, and then there would be editorial revision. Three wolves were introduced instead of one, as the editor had placed a good book in each of the hero's lower pockets, and so again the hero was thrice tempted by the three books banging against his legs. In one thing was the revision inapt, Mr. Atkins was a Baptist, but of course the editor did not know this and could be pardoned having the hero provided with Methodist Quarterly Reports.

❖ Yarns from Puck. ❖

"On came the wolves, their mouths gaping open as they gave vent to frequent howls. The Saints' Rest, the Holy Living and Holy Dying, flapped against Mr. Higginbotham's legs worse than ever, and the Book of Martyrs, and the missionary reports, lesson leaves, and tracts, weighed heavily about him. He said to himself that if he threw them away, perhaps the wolves would stop to see what the things flutter-



ing on the ice were, and he would gain time; but he thought of the wicked Russian woman who threw her children out to the pursuing wolves in order to save her own life, and concluded that it would be wrong to sacrifice such good literature. After all, if the wolves should keep on holding their mouths open in this cold air, howling, there was a strong possibility that

they would contract sore throat, which would develop into diphtheria, pneumonia, or lung fever, and they would die, and he would escape yet.

"On came the wolves, nearer, nearer, nearer, and a stiff breeze sprung up directly in Mr. Higginbotham's face. The Saints' Rest, the Holy living and the Holy Dying, flap against his legs worse than ever, but he puts aside temptation and struggles against the wind. The wolves gain. He fears he will be lost, but sees far ahead of him a long, slender black object lying on the ice. Perhaps it is a gun or something of the sort; a big sausage, perhaps. If he can only get there before the wolves overtake him, he may be able to defend himself and escape yet; or, if it is a sausage, the wolves will stop to eat it and he will escape yet.

"Nearer came the wolves. Mr. Higginbotham struggles against the wind and gets nearer the long, black thing. On, on, pant, pant, go the wolves; flap, flap, goes Mr. Higginbotham's overcoat. He is almost upon the black thing when the wolves make mighty leaps; one seizes the left side of the overcoat in his powerful jaws, another seizes the right side, the third seizes the tail; Mr. Higginbotham staggers; there is a tearing sound, the overcoat parts, leaving the bottom in the wolves' mouths; Mr. Higginbotham, released by the sudden tear, slides forward, falls upon the black object, leaps to his feet with it in his hands. It is a stout imitation ebony cane with a gold-plated head, the property of Selectman Johnson, to him presented by the freeholders of Mahopog township, and dropped by him on the ice while

❖ Yarns from Puck. ❖

going home from Dawson's tavern. Mr. Higginbotham turns to face his enemies with his trusty weapon.

"Behold! the wolves are rolling on their backs, pawing convulsively at their mouths. One had bitten through the overcoat just over where the Saints' Rest was, and his teeth had stuck in the book and he could n't get them out; another wolf had met a like misfortune with the Holy Living, and the teeth of the third were encumbered with the Holy Dying. Mr. Higginbotham rushed upon the first wolf, thrust a handful of Sunday School leaflets into his mouth, and, using the cane as a ramrod, rammed down the Saints' Rest and the leaflets, and the wolf gave a kick or two and lay calm and beautiful in death. He rushed upon the second and filled him full of Quarterly Missionary Reports. The third wolf had partially succeeded in extricating his jaws from the Holy Dying, but Mr. Higginbotham fell upon him and rammed down the Martyrs, a few tracts, and a pair of embroidered slippers presented to him that very day by Miss Mahala Brown, teacher of the infant class in the Sunday School at Mahopog Village. As he looked at the three dead wolves, he was thankful that he had not yielded to temptation and thrown away his portable library, for it had saved his life. He was also thankful that he had bought a cheap five-dollar overcoat that Fall, for a better one might not have parted so easily, and in that case he would not have had much use for an overcoat."

The congregation immediately took up the matter, and when the question of requesting Mr.

Atkins to resign came to a vote, Mr. Israel Peabody expressed the sentiment of the majority when he said: "I don't think it looks very well for a Baptist parson to write stories about fellers killin' wolves with Methodist Missionary Reports. It don't look like he was loyal to his own church."

And this was why the Reverend Edward Atkins changed his parish.

Wardon Allan Curtis.



WILLY AND THE MISSIONARY.



"He gave the Missionary an extra sharp dig in the ribs, as they circled the platform for the third time."

WILLY AND THE MISSIONARY.



ILLY was a bright, active boy of fifteen.

* * *

He had previously been younger, and no less bright and active than he was at the time this narrative begins. But, unfortunately, owing to the lack of interest taken in him by his father, and the awe and admiration of his brightness which were characteristic of his mother, the direction of his activities had generally been such as to render him distinctly distasteful to those, especially persons of maturer years, with whom he was thrown in contact — notably his school-teacher, a somewhat nervous young man who was paying his way through the theological seminary by undergoing a course of torture as a teacher in a public school where Willy was the chief inquisitor.

The most exasperating thing about Willy was his brightness, which always enabled him to avoid the punishment that the perverse nature of his activities should naturally have brought down upon him. But it was in vain that his teacher sought for occasion to discipline him. Willy had always so hedged himself in that, although his

teacher might be absolutely certain, morally, that Willy was responsible for any and almost every act of disorder that occurred in his room, he had never been able to catch him at any specific act that could not be passed off as an accident. In fact, his teacher realized that he had met his match in Willy, who was provoking enough always to know his lessons perfectly, which gave him a pull with the principal, which added to the difficulty of the situation.

But "Every dog has his day," even the under dog, and the teacher's came at last. A young man was wanted by the Foreign Board to go at once as a Missionary to Moribundha, one of the Friendly Islands, to take the place of a gentleman who had fallen a dietetic victim to the too friendly attentions of the natives.

Willy's teacher gladly offered his services and was promptly accepted, ordained and provided with a ticket to his destination. The steamer which stopped at Moribundha only sailed once every two years, and, in order to make connections, he was compelled to leave before the end of the school session. I am sorry to say that, so weak is human nature, the young minister's one anxiety was that he might not be able to get even with Willy before he went away. He had said nothing of his intended departure, but for some reason Willy had been unusually circumspect, and for a whole week had behaved in the most exemplary manner. Finally the last day came; still no breach of deportment had been committed in the classroom, when, of a sudden, a pane of glass was shattered, and a half a brick landed within six inches of Willy's desk.

❖ Yarns from Puck. ❖

"Aha! Now I 've got you, Willy!" shouted the teacher. In his desperation he was determined, somehow, to connect his young tormentor with the first act of disorder that occurred.

"Well, the brick nearly got me, sure," said Willy, who, oddly enough, had not been concerned in this apparent attack upon his life and happiness, as he glanced apprehensively at the window.



"Come here, sir, and receive the punishment for your outrageous conduct!" exclaimed the teacher. He was in for it now, and could not retreat.

"Outrageous nothing!" responded Willy; "what do you want to punish me for?"

"For breaking that window!" cried the teacher, fighting for time.

"How could I 'a' broken the window? Here's the brick that did it!"

"Yes, there's *half* the brick that did it," the teacher declared — feeling wildly about for any excuse to fasten the crime on his selected victim; "the half that you dropped on the floor when you threw the other half through the glass.

Come here, sir!"

The audacity of this suggestion positively baffled Willy. For an instant he could think of nothing to say; and that instant the teacher did not allow to go unimproved.



It is customary to draw a veil at this point over the subsequent proceedings, but it would require a large sized circus tent adequately to screen the scene that now ensued. But the teacher was twenty-two and Willy at this period was only eleven, and Willy received the first and last licking he ever got.

The next morning early, the teacher left for Moribundha.

Four years later he came back.

* * *

The young Missionary had been extraordinarily successful. Many a time had he faltered; many a time nearly given up trying to make any impression on the obdurate natives. Then he would think of Willy, and the thought would give him new courage, new determination to persevere. And now he had returned to raise funds for the erection of a church edifice, a parsonage and a parish house on his distant island for his devoted flock.

The method that occurred to him was to give lectures on the strange manners and customs of the wild tribe among whom his lot had been cast; and in pursuance of that idea he announced: "An evening with the Moribundhans," at the very school-house where he had taught previous to his departure. Inquiry on his part had elicited the information that, since his departure, Willy had never been concerned in any act of disorder, but had become the model pupil in deportment as he had always been in his studies. He had even gone to the principal and told him

with tears in his eyes that although he was not guilty of the offence for which he had been punished, he had often so exasperated and annoyed his teacher that he richly deserved the thrashing he had received.

The night of the lecture came, and the school-room was crowded to hear the interesting narration of the young Missionary. What especially caught the eyes of the boys was the array of curious costumes, implements and weapons that adorned the platform. The young Missionary told them the uses of all. He even put on some of the strange garments of the natives. Then he said that he could show the audience the method of courtship that had prevailed among the islanders previous to their conversion, if some gentleman would kindly volunteer to step upon the platform. No Moribundhan maiden, he explained, could marry unless she had two suitors. At a given time, usually the full of the moon, these suitors would fight a duel. The successful duelist would marry his lady-love and all the sisters of his opponent, who, poor fellow, was always served hot to grace the wedding festivities. If some gentleman in the audience would kindly volunteer to step upon the platform, he would be glad to show how the lovers fought on such occasions.

For a little while no one made any move. All the men seemed overcome with that sense of bashfulness and dislike of making bally idiots of themselves that is common and natural to self-respecting persons under such circumstances. And it was not until he had made his request for a third time that a tall, good looking lad of about

fifteen, rose up from his seat half-way back in the hall and modestly went forward.

With a pleased smile the young Missionary stepped to meet him. Something familiar in his appearance caused the smile to broaden into one of half recognition, which, it must be confessed, masked a slight feeling of uneasiness as, on the lad's closer approach, he realized that his assistant was to be his old friend Willy.

"Why, Willy, this is quite a surprise! I'm glad to see you," said the young Missionary.

"Well, I'm glad to see you," replied Willy, with a bright smile, as he walked up to the collection of weapons and selected a long-handled spear with a wicked-looking three-pointed head that seemed like a compromise between Neptune's trident and an eel-fork. "Now, do you want me to be the man who is killed, or do you want to be killed?"

"Oh, I don't think we need go so far as that," said the Missionary with a nervous laugh. "By the way, don't you find that long spear rather awkward? Suppose you take this short club, it is a very favorite weapon — oh, be careful, Willy; there you see, you've caught one of the prongs in my collar."

"Why, so I have — excuse me," said Willy. "It is *very* long. No, I don't believe I'll change it for the club; I'll soon get the knack of it."

"Now," said the Missionary, retiring to the extreme edge of the platform, "the two opponents usually approach from opposite sides, shouting like this: 'Wahoo! wahoo! hoowa! hoowa!' and brandishing their weapons — do be careful, Willy! — yes, you've got the words all right, but

you scratched my ear that time — the natives generally hold the spear somewhere about the middle of the handle, not at the extreme end. The two men then circle around each other, still uttering the same weird cry, and prodding their weapons at each other. No, no, no! they don't really poke each other yet — Willy. Then, they turn their backs on each other and pretend to run away a few steps — but one of them suddenly turns and pursues the other — No, not so quick, Willy; eh — I — ow! — *I* was going to pursue *you*, Willy. Willy, he does n't pursue him so far! Willy, you must n't stick that into me so hard! Willy, that hurts — ”

“ So did that — Wahoo! wahoo! — licking you — hoowa! hoowa! — gave me four years ago,” said Willy, loud enough to be heard by the Missionary, but not by the audience, which was applauding vigorously the life-like representation of wild life at Moribundha, as rendered by Willy and the Missionary.

“ If I 'd have — wahoo! hoowa! — had this spear then, you would n't have — hoowa! wahoo! — clubbed me so easy. How do *you* — wahoo! like it? It seems to tickle the audience 'most to death — hoowa !” said Willy as he gave the Missionary an extra sharp dig in the ribs, as they circled the platform for the third time.

The Missionary was now on the dead run, his hair flying, his cheeks red, his breath coming in quick gasps, while, holding the club behind him with both hands, he endeavored by whirling it round and round, like a cow's tail in fly-time, to ward off the sharp and painful stabs with which Willy pointed his disagreeable reminiscences.

A sharp cut across his knuckles caused the Missionary to drop his club, and, suddenly finding himself utterly defenseless, he fell to the ground and rolled over and over with the intention of precipitating himself into the audience. But Willy was too quick for him; and, planting one foot on his former teacher's head, he held the three points of the spear at his throat as he lay upon his side, amid the cheers and plaudits of the assemblage, as he had seen pictures in his Robinson Crusoe and other books of adventures in savage lands.

"Are we square?" asked Willy.

"Yes," said the Missionary.

"And if I decide to let you up, you will thank me before all these people, and tell them that I have given a very accurate representation of a magnanimous Young Native whom you knew, who spared his rival's life, and afterwards they became very good friends?"

"Yes," said the Missionary.

And he did so.

H. G. Paine.

A SLAVE TO FANCY.



*"She blushes prettily and thanks
me with downcast eyes."*

A SLAVE TO FANCY.



HERE was a time when I found pleasure in my wonderful imagination, but now that I can no longer control it, I am miserable. For some years, while in pursuit of my literary labors—and incidental bread and butter—I indulged my fancy to its fullest extent. I would send it forth into the world and allow it to wander here and there in pursuit of the beautiful.

The exercise proved beneficial to its growth, and, as time went on, my imagination advanced in strength until I was able to call up phantoms from the misty deep and to have those phantoms appear in answer to the summons.

As you well know, phantoms are mere products of the imagination, and I was well pleased with that fancy of mine which could produce such wonderful effects. I gave my fancy wider scope—restraining it less and less—until my imagination became an invisible power having dominion over me. It was a non-corporate entity, so to speak: a Thing without substance.

One night, after having retired at nine

o'clock because I had nothing better to do, I lay awake dreaming, and the battle for supremacy began. Up to that time I had control of my exuberant fancy, and so, that night, I bade it amuse me. My thought was bound by my personal limitations, but my fancy was a thing apart and knew no confines. So, having called my fancy as an adjunct to my thought, I pictured myself in receipt of a letter from a well-known law-firm announcing the fact that some maiden



lady in the Far West, having received benefit from my writings, had remembered me in her will and died, leaving me —

“Fifty thousand dollars,” suggested my imagination, which as yet had not been called upon.

“Pooh,” I protested; “it’s only in fun — make it a million.”

But my imagination was obdurate, and after a tussle we compromised on one hundred thousand dollars. I say “we,” because at that time I first

recognized the power of my imagination — Imagination would be proper — as apart from myself.

"Well," I went on in thought, "this old and sweet lady left me one hundred thousand dollars and a brown-stone house on the Avenue."

At this point Fancy again asserted itself with an objection. Finally I was allowed to retain the house, but obliged to place it on one of the side streets. Even then I was a man of wealth, and I thought of a trip to Europe — an ocean voyage in June.

"No; March," put in my Imagination.

"Now, look here," I said; "who's doing this? This trip has got to take place in June. How can you sit on the deck in the moonlight on a cold March night?"

"What's that for?" asked my Imagination, that was no longer mine in the possessive sense.

"Why!" I exclaimed, "there's a girl on board the ship."

"Oh, no; there is n't," protested this assertive Fancy.

"But I say there is," I replied; "there's a girl on board this ship to whom I'm going to make love."

"A short, stout girl," said my Imagination. Secretly I was glad that the existence of the girl was conceded without further trouble, for I hated to think of making the trip all alone, but, being allowed a sweet companion, I was going to have her as I pleased.

"A tall, slender girl," I said, positively; "one of those willowy creatures, with hair the color of —"

"A sunset," interrupted that irrepressible

Imagination. I laughed at the idea. "What! a girl with sunset hair on a moonlight night?" I retorted. "No; this girl has dark brown hair."

"No tresses?" came the whisper.

"No; *hair*. Eyes dark and brown as well, and a complexion —"

"Also dark and brown," was the suggestion next advanced by Imagination.

But I paid no attention to it —

"A complexion like peaches and cream," I thought.

"Now put in a rival," said my Imagination.

Again I rebelled. I wanted that girl all to myself. What was the use of having a mythical fortune and a shadowy girl if you had to destroy the harmony of the dream by introducing a rival?

"But it would be so much more of a victory," insinuated my Imagination, "if you have to fight against odds."

"I won't have a rival," I said; "you would make him interrupt me at every turn."

"Oh, no!" protested Fancy; "I would n't be so mean as all that. We'll just have that pretended rival and keep him in his stateroom the entire voyage."

I yielded — for there was something pleasant in the idea of that miserable youth unable to cope with Fate and Love.

"This girl and I meet on the evening of the first day," I thought. "She is reading a book, when suddenly the wind tears it from her hand and I catch it —"



❖ Yarns from Puck. ❖

“Better have the wind take off her hat,” broke in Fancy at this moment; “she would be more grateful then.”

I granted the point. “I catch the hat and return it to her. She blushes prettily and thanks me with downcast eyes. Suddenly she looks up and remembers having met me the Summer before in the mountains.”

“No;” protested Fancy.

“Yes;” said I, angry at the interruption to my thought.

“Would n’t do,” argued Fancy. “She knew you the Summer before, when you were poor? No—no—why should she care for you now? If she loves you, it will be on account of your money; make her a stranger.”

There was something in this suggestion.

“Looking up at me,” ran my romance in thought, “she asks my name and is pleased when I mention it, for she is familiar with my writings.”

“That’s too egotistical,” asserted Fancy; “she never heard of you before, and you are humbled—you want to begin to love in a lowly spirit.”

I had to succumb to Fancy’s argument. “Well,” I thought, “we become good friends at once and henceforth I am her devoted cavalier. I read to her, I talk to her, walk with her, sit next to her at table, and grow to regard her as the one goal of my life.”

“Humph,” said Fancy; “that’s going it pretty strong.”

I continued my dream regardless of the interruption:

“One night while we are seated on the deck —”

"The rival appears," put in Fancy.

"You promised to keep him in his stateroom," I retorted; "and so he does n't appear."

"While seated on the deck I suddenly take her hand and say I love her, and she"—I went on—"looks steadily at me a moment and whispers—"

"No!" cried Fancy, exultingly.

"She says 'Yes!'" I answered.

"She says 'No!'" retorted my Imagination, "because she is engaged to the rival. For what reason was he introduced, if not to make trouble? Staying in his stateroom did n't interfere with your romance, if there had n't been some previous understanding; she says 'No!'—she's got to say 'No!'"

"She has n't," I said, sulkily.

"Yes, sir-ee," continued Fancy; "she says 'No!' Do you expect to marry her?"

"Certainly, I do," was my reply; "why did I begin with the legacy?"

"Dunno," replied my Fancy, "but you are *not* to marry—you are not even to be engaged."

"Why?" was my indignant query.

"Because it's altogether too serious a question," said my Imagination; "and when thought becomes serious, I am stagnant. I am set aside to wilt. When you are engaged, I am forgotten for the sake of the girl; and when you marry, Imagination dies. The two can not exist in common—I can not permit it—I *will not!* You can not become engaged to my undoing—and as to marriage—" if there had been anything of it to produce a sound, Fancy would then have laughed.

❖ Yarns from Puck. ❖

"Dream as much as you will," continued my Imagination, "but I am going to control those dreams. Imagination has its limits, and matrimony is the extreme. I can not permit it, as I have remarked before. You have a good, well-developed Imagination, now, in me, and I desire to continue in existence. And I am going to! That girl says '*No!*' — do you understand? Spend your money as you will — indulge in all possible flights — propose as often as you feel like it, but I am going to assert myself when necessary. Henceforth, young man, I am assertive. I rule."

"No, you don't," I answered; "that girl says '*Yes!*'"

"Does she?" sneered Fancy; "very well — I'm going to get out of it; what's it all about, anyway?"

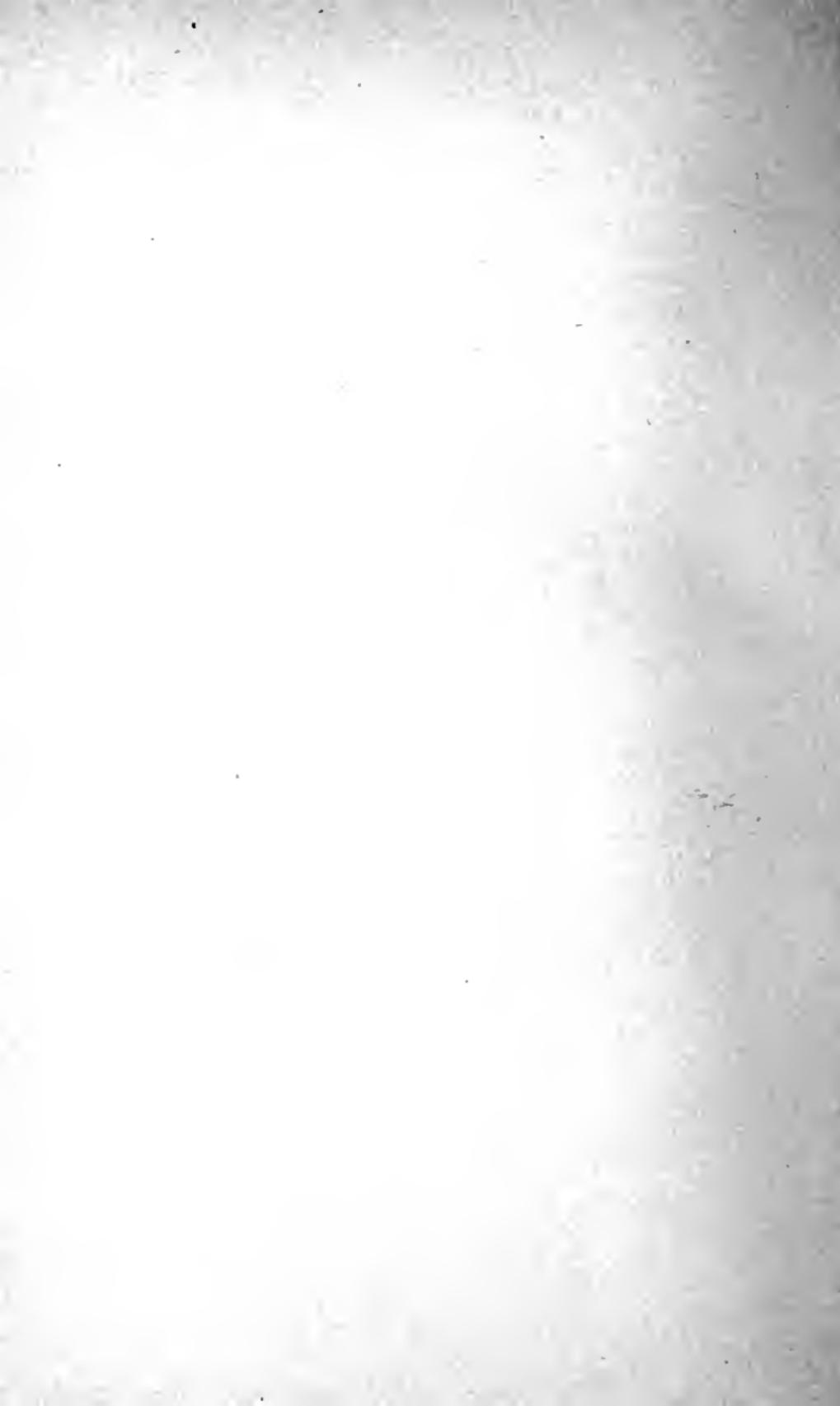
I had forgotten utterly. The dream had vanished with the departure of my Imagination.

"Now go to sleep," said Fancy, coming back, "and remember that I set my own limits. What did the girl say?"

"'No!'" I answered feebly.



Flavel S. Mines.



GEORGE BYERS.



“In the thickest toiled George Byers.”

GEORGE BYERS.



FEELING of superiority is a feeling of blind, unquestioning happiness. How fortunate, then, that for almost all of us kind Nature, by a *tour de force*, provides objects to look down upon!

Small, slow, forgotten Elmville had rapture in looking down upon George Byers. George was an out-and-out loafer. He was the foil to industry, the contrast to forehandedness, the shadow to ambition. How George got to be as complete a loafer as he was it would be hard and perhaps useless to tell. For of what avail is it painfully to scan the footsteps of human prodigies? Suffice it to say that when George was twenty-five years old, when he had loafed away from home, and when, after loafing here and there oblivious of all else in his absorption in loafing, he had loafed into Elmville, a stray and a stranger, he was a complete and perfect loafer.

George was a slim, shambling fellow, and he had acquired that suppleness of the loafing-joints which enabled him to loaf easily and picturesquely in many attitudes: and this was a good



thing for George, for changing his position was the only rest he ever got. He used to look down at the ground a good deal, and to stand and look at the horizon a good deal, and to lie down and look up at the sky a good deal. To lie thus probably irked George, for he must have foreseen that some time he would have to get up — when night fell, or when it rained; or, at any rate, when Winter came on. But we all have our trials. George wore faded clothes, and country wits said that his hair and whiskers "looked like the breaking up of a hard Winter." To be made the butt of a Welsh goat is hard; to be made the mark of the country wit is harder. The weapon of the country wit is like that peculiar pop-gun which has a cork bullet attached by a string, and which, though it has but one charge, is never out of ammunition. What George thought of the world, I do not know.

One hot morning in August, George was loafing along the road that ran out of the village, when old Granger, a slaving, bow-backed farmer, rattling along in a farm wagon, drew up on him. Old Granger's first idea when he saw George ahead was, of course, to say nothing to him, but to push on the lines, and to drive nobly by, like a float of Industry Scorning Indolence. But he had another idea, and he stopped his team.

"Whoa, there; whoa! Say, George, git in and go along with me. I'm going to start thrashin' this mornin', and I'm kind o' short-handed."

Yarns from Puck.

"I don't know anything about threshing," said George, desperately.

"Why, you've allus lived in the country!"

"Yes," said George; "but threshing's a thing — that I — don't know — that I — ever give much attention to. No. I'd just bother you. I've *seen* threshing-machines — different times — but I — never give 'em much attention."

It was a hurrying time. Granger could n't wait for George to decide to go (especially as, if George ever decided anything, it would be not to go alive under any circumstances), so Granger chanced a ruse, and said brightly:

• "Well, git right in."

And George put his foot on the step, and at the same time Granger hit his horses — and there George was. To avoid injury, he had to finish getting into the wagon, where he sat on a pile of bags, held onto the sides of the box for dear life, and was bounced and jounced and bumped and thumped over the rough road which led to Granger's farm.

Here a word from me about farming might not be amiss. What I say is always good. There is tilling the soil, and there is farming; the one comes under the head of agriculture, the other under the head of *derniers resorts*. In tilling the soil there are the charming details of "garnering and threshing the golden grain;" in farming there are the details of harvesting and threshing. Threshing is tough; anybody knows that who has ever threshed or been thrashed. But to return to George, although he had as yet scarcely returned to himself.

By the time George arrived at the moated



grange, all the other men had chosen their places about the threshing-machine, and the worst place was left for George. George did not know the difference, but it was undoubtedly the worst place. It was right behind the bat.

Toot, toot! The gifted agricultural steam-engineer yanked the string; the whistle sounded (however) as if controlled by some superior intelligence. The game was called.

And now men threw sheaves—called bundles, in farming — into the teeth of the cylinder, which roared and shrieked. The air became full of dust and lint and powder. Imagine a feather-factory in a cyclone, a dust-cart in March, a simoom in the desert, a war-cloud in Africa. After filling the air with dust, the cylinder still roared at horrible speed, and gulping bundle after bundle, shook out more dust—and more dust—and more dust, as a wet dog shakes out water. But the cylinder never pauses, while sometimes the dog must pause—for he is only human.

While the dust poured out, the noise shook

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the earth. The heat of Summer settled around like a great burning suffocation. Men's eyes and noses were full of green dust. Their whiskers looked like 2 lbs. of tea.

In the thickest toiled George Byers — *toiled* George Byers! He was on the straw-stack at the funnel's mouth; and if he had not toiled, the straw would have covered him. The noise was so great that he could not expostulate. He could not pause to think. He could not open his mouth to breathe.

For hours the struggle lasted. When the gifted agricultural steam-engineer yanked the whistle for dinner, the cylinder stopped. Then George climbed down from the stack — the monument of his unwilling industry — and made a sneak for home.

It was three weeks before he recovered his old tranquil frame of vacuity. During that time he had nervous intervals of thought, and in these he whittled out a labor-saving device for threshing machines. When the period of mental disturbance was past, he recalled his contrivance with indifference. Of course, the idea of a patent occurred to him, for he was an American, but he only thought that sometime he would think about thinking about it.

But that the contrivance had been made became known to a man in the village named Hinchman, whose delight it was to regard himself as a speculator. He used to think if he knew that wool, say, was going to take a rise of a straight ten cents, how he'd like quietly to step in and buy all he could borrow, or beg money to carry. He was full of such schemes. But so far he had

not speculated, except in a speculative way. Now, recognizing his opportunity, he agreed with George — who said nothing — to furnish money to patent the threshing-machine device on condition of receiving the first \$200 that the patent earned. The patent was obtained, and in due time it appeared in the patent reports. George was not unduly moved at the time; but, undoubtedly, he intended to rejoice as soon as he got around to it.

Now, when George had his patent, he would, had he been active, have started out to sell his invention to the threshing-machine men; and the threshing-machine men would have seen no merit in George's device; but, on the contrary, they would have said that it was old and worthless, and that, although first-rate, they had the same device themselves; and George might have ended by being discouraged, and falling into slothful ways.

But George had a habit of never starting out to do anything. He simply continued to loaf.

The threshing-machine men, on their part, after allowing George a decent interval in which to come in and surrender, began to write to George A. Byers. George continued to loaf. The men wrote more. George loafed more.

On a day, Mr. Keen of the Ajax Thresher Co. came to Elmville. He asked Mr. Davis of the Eagle House if there was n't a Mr. Byers living in Elmville.

"No," said Davis; but added: "What! you mean Georgebyers?"

"Yes," said Keen.

"Yes," said Davis, aghast.

"Where can I find him?" asked Keen.

❖ Yarns from Puck. ❖

"There," said Davis, pointing out at the porch; for it happened that at that moment George sat on the lower step, resting.

Keen went out, leaving Davis wondering that anyone should ask for Georgebyers.



"Is this Mr. Byers — or Myers?" began Keen, craftily.

"Yes," said George. He was not particular about the name, but he hoped that this stranger would not take the liberty of proposing a job of work to him.

"I have written you about a little device of yours, and, *being* in Elmville, it occurred to me that this was your address. I don't know whether you answered my letter or not — as I have been away —"

"No," said George, after a long pause.

Keen was somewhat discouraged by the careless tone; but he began to talk of the patent, and,

warming into the accustomed work of robbing patentees, he was soon speaking so lightly and even depreciatingly of George's patent, that any other man than George would have made an immediate apology for the affront of offering the patent to a superior world. Probably George, who was not a bad fellow, felt the obligation of making an apology, and if given time he would have made it; but, of course, he could n't get around to it in a minute. While he was grinding his heel in the sand at the foot of the step, Keen asked for a proposition for the use of the device. George could answer this. He said:

“It 's a thing — that — I don't know — as I 've thought much about.”

Then, much relieved, George took a well-earned rest.

Mr. Keen considered that he had received two buffets; but, determined to do his whole duty and exhaust every resource for properly robbing George, he said:

“This device might be worth trying, and I might undertake to introduce it; of course, getting the use of it myself free, and getting half the royalty from other makers.”

George took no responsibility about this, but ground his heel in the sand, so that Keen was staggered; but he rallied enough to say:

“Of course, I am offering you a splendid thing, but I always believe in giving patentees every cent there is in it.”

George changed his position with ease, and looked at the horizon. Keen's heart sank at sight of so obdurate a trader, and, resuming the talk, he offered to be content with but one-quarter of out-

❖ Yarns from Puck. ❖

side royalties — and then, with no outside royalty. But while Keen talked, George loafed unvexedly, and he kept loafing until Keen found himself forced (as he thought) to offer to pay a royalty from his own works.

“Now, when I say a royalty from our own works, the question is, how much. Of course, it would be only nominal (George yawned); well, say \$1. This is very high —” Keen talked of the extravagance of this figure till George crossed his legs, when he said he might make it \$2. He reproached himself for offering this price; but George leaned on his elbow, and Keen made it \$3.

At one o'clock George, who had to ring the church-bell for school, rose and started off.

“You will be back?” said Keen.

“I will be around somewhere,” replied George.

In the afternoon Mr. Keen had difficulty in rounding George up, for George desired to repose; but he rounded him up, and, starting in afresh, bid himself up very handsomely. George had hardly had such a disturbing day since the threshing, and he was forced to loaf in self-defense. His old skill did not now desert him, and he loafed as if he had been condemned to live for life. Keen tried to protect himself against George's evidently extravagant notions by threatening to use the invention of a gifted inventor named Morrison. George did not seem to mind it. Keen bid himself up again, but said that George's invention was crude and would have to be changed at great expense by practical men. George was not affected. Then Keen surrendered. He mounted to his

highest figure, \$10. Even then George was silent, and Keen said in despair, "Well, what do you say?"

"There's a man named Hinchman here that's got to have \$200," said George.

"Well, of course you will pay that?"

"I?" George fell to loafing again.

Keen yielded the point, and said *he* would. At this George showed some faint surprise.

"Can't we settle this to-night?" asked Keen, anxiously. "I want — to get away." Thereupon Keen drew papers. It just happened that he had



a form of contract with him. He put up the \$200 for Hinchman.

The next day George gave Hinchman his money.

"How much do you get?" asked Hinchman, delighted with speculation.

❖ Yarns from Puck. ❖

"Ten dollars," said George. George was glad enough, but he did not show it much.

"Why, you blamed idiot," said Hinchman, after reading the contract, "you get ten dollars *a machine!*"

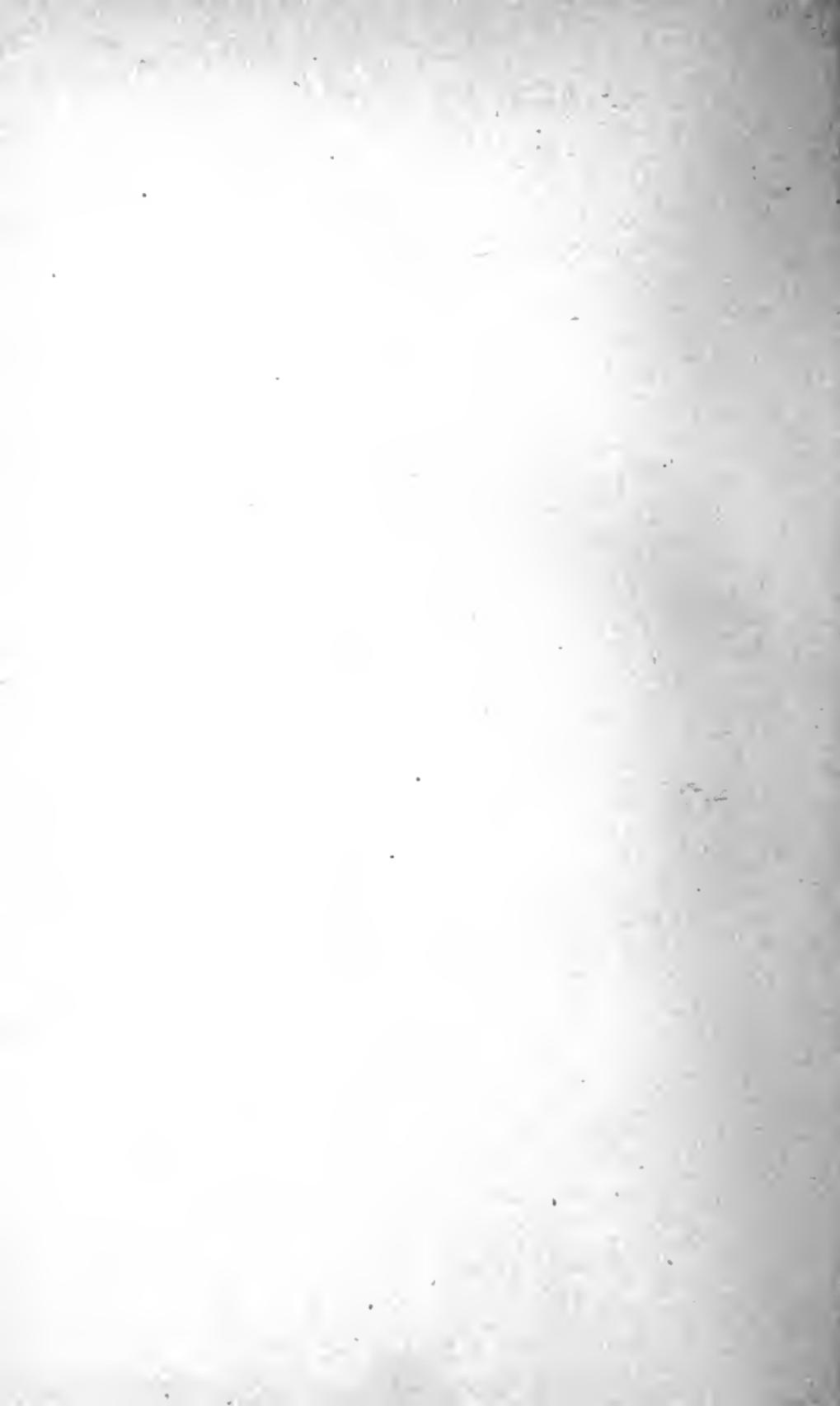
"Is that so?" said George. George felt mortified. He could feel the mortification even then. "Well," he said in explanation, "that was something I did n't give — much attention to."

George is now rich; and this story shows how a man's being perfectly worthless may be worth a good deal to him; and it ought to encourage us.

CONCLUSION.

Abe Granger still lives on the old farm. Hinchman's wife is still living, and Hinchman has never married again. The paths that led from the old manse ran only as far as the road.

Williston Fish.



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